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SPECIAL DOUBLE-ISSUE

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BATTLEFIELD
EARTH
X-MEN
DINOSAUR
FLINTSTONES II

BABYLON 5

Vol 31 No 12/Vol 32 No 1



THE BEHIND-THE-SCENES STORY OF THE CREATION OF THE
GREATEST SCIENCE FICTION EPIC EVER FILMED

CINEFANTASTIQUE

X-MEN FILMING THE COMICS



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Also in the same issue, our report from London of the filming of Dream-Works' CHICKEN RUN, the stop-motion feature from the creators of Wallace and Gromit, animator Don Bluth and Gary Goldman on the making of SF epic TITAN A.E., director Paul Verhoeven and "invisible man" Kevin Bacon on THE HOLLOW MAN, plus ILM on ROCKY & BULLWINKLE.

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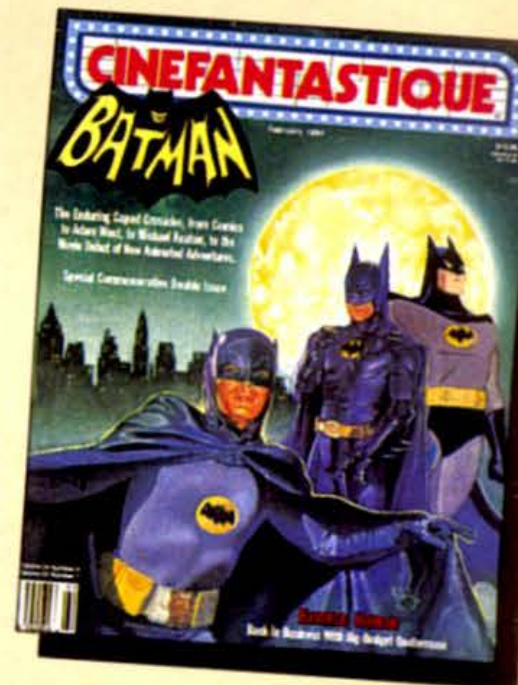
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"The Magazine with a Sense of Wonder"

JUNE 2000

BABYLON 5 spoken here! Welcome to our commemorative double-issue collector's edition on what we call "the greatest science fiction epic ever filmed!" If you're a fan of the show, you need no convincing. If you're among the uninitiated, you have a whole universe to discover, and we hope this issue prompts you to sample the episodes you may have missed in re-run on TNT.

We needed a double issue to fully chronicle the achievements of B5 because this unique science fiction saga spans five years, 110 episodic hours and five TV movies, all pieces of an intricate, complex mosaic conceived in the mind of writer-producer J. Michael Straczynski, truly a science fiction visionary if there ever was one. Besides a complete episode guide to the series, annotated with the comments of the talented writers, producers, directors, cast and designers who made the show a dramatic high-watermark for the genre, the issue also offers a season by season guide to the behind-the-scenes saga of creating the show, plus a look at its amazing special effects.

And with summer approaching, this issue also offers a preview of the riches Hollywood has to offer on the big screen, opening soon at a theatre near you! New York correspondent Dan Persons files his report from the set in Montreal on John Travolta's long-awaited movie adaptation of L. Ron Hubbard's BATTLEFIELD EARTH, opening May 12.

Dinosaurs are back in a big way. Disney opens its first CGI feature DINOSAUR May 19 and animation expert Mike Lyons takes a look this issue at the amazing technological advances at Digital Disney's Secret Lab. But opening first is Universal's THE FLINTSTONES IN VIVA ROCK VEGAS, jumping the summer gun on April 28. Fred Szebin provides a report on all the fun, which includes ILM CGI dinosaurs and Ann Margret singing the title song!

Plus there are previews of big summer blockbusters like X-MEN, our next cover story, and director Paul Verhoeven's HOLLOW MAN, an update of H.G. Wells.

Frederick S. Clarke



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X-MEN

FILMING THE COMICS

Director Bryan Singer makes Marvel's mutants movie stars.

By Paul Wardle

Ever since the phenomenal success of the **SUPERMAN** and **BATMAN** movies, comic book adaptations have flooded the screen. Most of these have been a disappointment to fans of the books, and the vast majority have featured super-powered characters. For some reason, these characters, a staple of comic book reading since the late 1930s, are difficult to translate to the screen. When **BATMAN** was released in 1989, it jump-started the comic book industry the way nothing else had since the 1960s. Ironically, the number one comic book company at that time was not *DC*, who published **BATMAN** but *Marvel Comics*, now Marvel Entertainment. Yet none of Marvel's popular superheroes has ever been able to generate a successful film adaptation.

The failure of Marvel's characters on the big screen has nothing to do with flaws in the original character concepts, but in the way they've been handled. One major problem is money. Superhero movies require dazzling special effects to make the heroes fly convincingly, blow things up, and even metamorphosize into other creatures. All past TV and film adaptations of Marvel comics have looked cheap, and often changed key elements that made the original comics so intriguing for generations of fans.

The makers of the new **X-MEN** film from 20th Century-



Ian McKellan, star of Singer's **APT PUPIL**, plays Magneto, the leader of the foes of humanity, the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants.

Fox have got that dilemma taken care of. A \$75 million budget has been granted the project, including the biggest media blitz Marvel has ever been afforded. Though the next issue of *Cinefantastique* will feature in-depth coverage of the movie, and interviews with several cast members, director Bryan Singer and others, for now let's set the stage for what's to follow.

The shooting has been cloaked in secrecy from the start. No press were allowed on the set until late January, though the shooting had commenced in late September 1999. In all, the shooting, which wrapped up on February 14th, took 91 days, and is reportedly the biggest budget movie ever to be shot in and around Toronto.

It's a relatively mild winter for Toronto this year, and a large portion of the filming was done out doors. The alleyway behind an abandoned distillery served as a setting for a concentration camp sequence, of which we are permitted to know nothing. Inside the old building, littered with hundred-year-old barrels, and sporting a sign that reminds you that the distillery was providing service since 1832, interior sequences are shot.

Despite the ban on information, leaks have occurred to vex the executives at Fox. One sequence involving a helicopter turned up on the local news broadcast only two hours later, and photocopied storyboard sequences were stolen and ended up on E-bay, for sale by auction. They were pulled off and the culprits caught, but again, Fox won't discuss it.

So here is what we do know about the film. It fuses together several different time periods in the 36 year history of *The X-Men* comic series. The original concept, as released in the team's first issue in 1963, centered around a school for mutants, gifted, but by mainstream standards freakish, teenagers. The threat of atomic mutation after World War II was still on many people's minds, and thalidomide babies had shown what birth defects could occur if man meddled in nature.

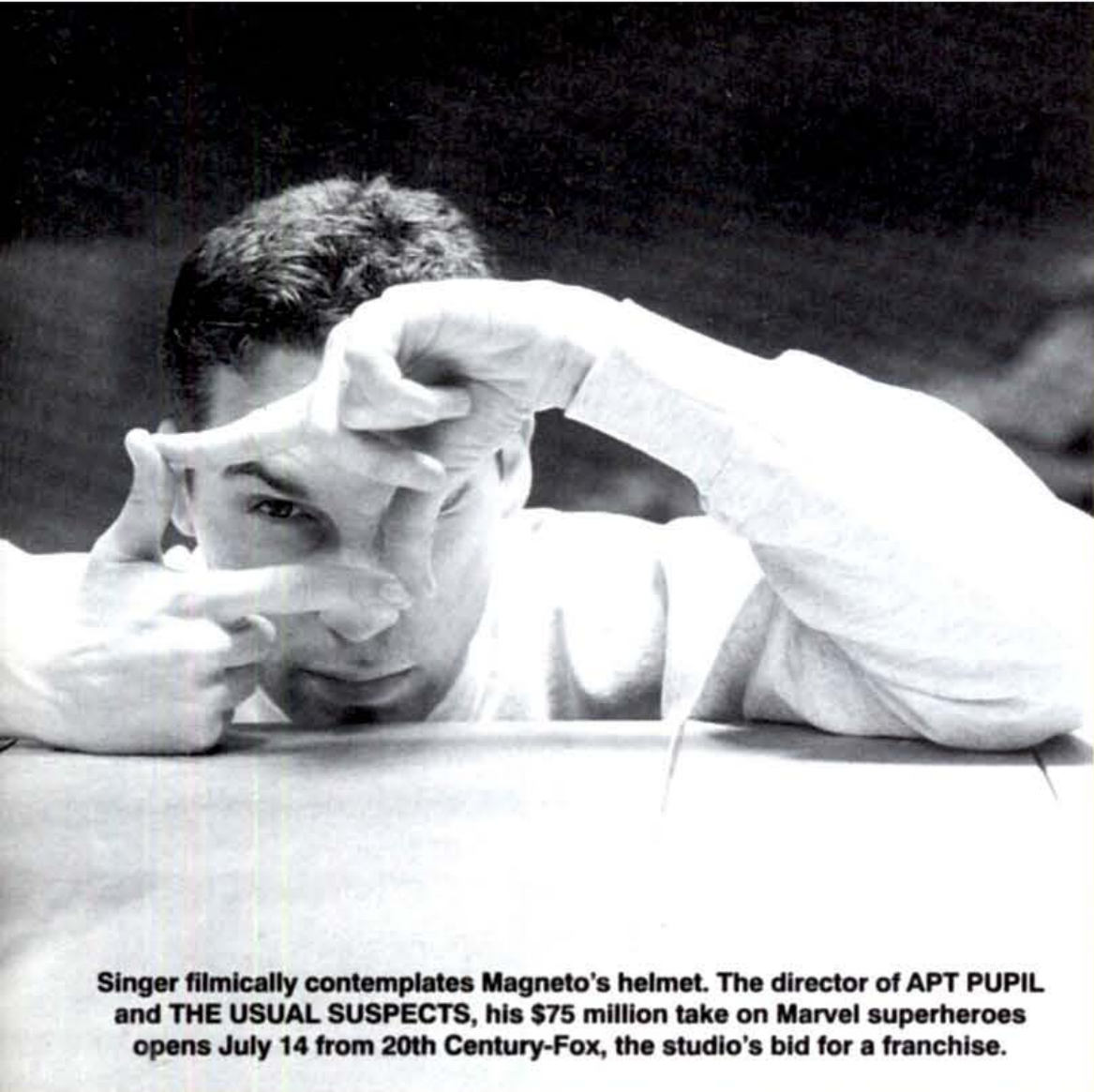
Professor Charles Xavier was a wheelchair bound mentor whose wealth was exceed-

ed-only by his brain power. He taught the five original X-Men how to use their abilities, and to fight the evil mutants that wanted to enslave mankind. The X-Men were hated by the general public as much as the evil mutants they fought, because of prejudice. The comic was originally a creation of Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, but throughout the 1960's, several other writers and artists handled the feature.

In 1975, the X-Men were revamped into a completely new, international group, and for the next 15 years, attained their greatest popularity, even exceeding Marvel stalwarts like Spiderman and The Fantastic Four. It is primarily members of this later group that form the crux of **THE X-MEN** movie. Patrick Stewart will play Professor Xavier, or Professor X, as he is often called. The X-Men not only get their name from him, but also from their X-tra abilities. This, according to original writer/editor Stan Lee was an afterthought, and came about because of his publisher's trepidation of using the word "mutant" on the cover.

Helping to teach the new students are Scott Summers (Cyclops) and Jean Grey, who in the comics was known as Marvel Girl, then Phoenix in the late 1970's. Here, she will be played by a beautiful Dutch





Singer filmically contemplates Magneto's helmet. The director of *APT PUPIL* and *THE USUAL SUSPECTS*, his \$75 million take on Marvel superheroes opens July 14 from 20th Century-Fox, the studio's bid for a franchise.

actress, Famke Janssen. Jean Grey's powers were not as powerful as Professor Xavier's at first, but she could move heavy objects and people with her mind. Cyclops power was both a blessing and a curse. Forced to wear a visor at all times, Cyclops could destroy practically anything with the red beam that comes out of his eyes. In the film, his character is portrayed by Jimmy Marsden.

Among the newer members of the school, who join up over the course of the movie, is Storm, (played by the ravishing Halle Berry) a storm goddess from Kenya who controls the elements. A younger student is Rogue, played by Anna Paquin, who won an Oscar for her role in *THE PIANO*. Rogue can suck the life force out of any being, and therefore is unable to touch anyone, except as a weapon. She can also absorb the powers of other super-powered mutants.

Of the many villains the X-Men have faced, only a few were chosen to comprise the film version of *The Brotherhood Of Evil Mutants*, a group that represents the opposition to Xavier's project. While Xavier and his team try to circumvent the public's hostility towards mutantkind with tolerance and education, the Brotherhood wants to wipe out humans, seeing themselves, for all their

flaws, as vastly superior.

The leader of this evil force is the malevolent Magneto, master of Magnetism. Played by Ian McKellan, who starred in director Bryan Singer's previous film, *APT PUPIL*, Magneto is not to be trifled with, and his partners in crime possess the skills to give the X-Men a run for their money. The sychophantic Toad, is played by Ray Park, who was rocketed to stardom after his appearance in *THE PHANTOM MENACE*. Sabertooth, an animalistic powerhouse, is played by ex-wrestler Tyler Mane. For those of you who are not professional wrestling fans, Tyler is 6'10" and weighs 270 pounds, with not a hint of fat on his body. Mane is a nice guy in real life, but an imposing figure as he ducks to come in a door. As Sabertooth, he wears lifts that bring him to a height of 7'5". Rounding out the cast of evil mutants is Mystique, played by the beautiful Rebecca Romijn-Stamos. Definitely the prime sex symbol of the cast (though Berry and Janssen are both gorgeous), Mystique, is a shape-changer whose natural skin color is a dark bluish grey.

Hovering somewhere between these two camps is Logan, better known to comic fans as Wolverine. Played by Australian actor Hugh Jackman, Logan is expected to be the

GETTING MARVEL RIGHT

"The failure up to now of Marvel's comic book characters on the big screen has nothing to do with flaws in the original character concepts, but the way they've been handled filmically."

most popular character in the movie. Though he is definitely leaning towards the X-Men by the second half of the story, Wolverine is a loner who doesn't want to join either group. Created in 1974, Wolverine was added to the X-Men lineup a year later, and quickly became one of Marvel's biggest stars, a distinction that continues to the present day. Jackman has achieved the look and the intensity needed to play this Canadian anti-hero, whose anger has made him a borderline psychotic who would just as soon slash your face with his adamantium claws as look at you. In real life, Jackman is friendly and easy going, and he will be among those who will be interviewed in our next issue.

About the story, I am forbidden to reveal anything at this time, but as you may have guessed there will be an epic clash between the good and evil mutants. Also in the plot are political forces that want to hinder Xavier's plans and perhaps destroy all the mutants on Earth. Heading up this faction will be Senator Robert Kelly, whose paranoia about mutants will rival Senator Joseph McCarthy's red scare about communism in the 1950's. He will be played by actor Bruce Davison, whose lengthy list of credits include the horror cult classic *WILLARD*.

A climactic battle scene on New York's Statue Of Liberty will reportedly rival that of Hitchcock's *SABOTEUR* for action and suspense. In addition there will be scenes showing the mutants in classrooms, testing out their powers and getting to the essence of who they are and why they were given these gifts, all with the help and guidance of the benevolent Xavier.

Will a new big budget superhero movie like this revive the flagging comic book industry,

of which super-hero books are an increasingly smaller part? We'll have to wait and see. X-Men fans have been fantasizing about what a movie might be able to do with these characters for decades. Some may be disappointed with certain elements, changes, groupings of characters or casting decisions, but they will also know that this is probably the closest they have come to date to seeing the X-Men realized on the silver screen.

Beneath the effects and action is a subtext that producer Ralph Winter called "a conflict of values." These are characters "with enormous powers and yet enormous deficiencies." Their outsider status and unconventional childhood has given them a unique perspective, but filled them with resentments and insecurities about the outside world. And that is something that any teenager can relate to, whether or not they have X-tra talents. The isolation that comes with being different. *X-MEN*. Coming in July. □

The Marvel comic book featuring Wolverine, played by Hugh Jackman, and Rogue, played by Anna Paquin.



CHICKEN RUN

By Alan Jones

From the day in 1990 when Nick Park won the first of his three Academy Awards for *CREATURE COMFORTS*, a Plasticine stop-motion animation short with zoo animals talking about their lives, people wondered when the Bristol-based Aardman Animations would make their first feature-length film. The Oscar-winning success of Park's next two shorts, *WRONG TROUSERS* (1993) and *A CLOSE SHAVE* (1995), featuring the cheese-loving Wallace and his world-weary canine companion Gromit increased that speculation.

But it wasn't until Park, with Aardman co-founder Peter Lord, who also earned two Oscar nominations for his shorts *ADAM* and *WATS PIG*, joined forces with DreamWorks SKG in a \$250 million deal, that a full-length feature became a hard-and-fast reality. Park said, "Jeffrey Katzenberg was a huge fan of our work and when he was the head of Disney he approached us with the idea of making a feature. But it didn't seem possible for such a tiny company, as ours was in 1995. So when Jeffrey went to DreamWorks he asked us again, and as they were starting out and didn't have a whole history behind them like Disney did, we signed a five picture deal with them."

Peter Lord added, "We refused to sign for ages with anyone because we were suspicious of Hollywood, in truth. DreamWorks convinced us because they were very enthusiastic, didn't mind that our first feature wouldn't be a musical and promised they would be very hands-off. That was really important to us, the fact they would be very respectful of what we did. From other interested parties we always picked up signals that they wanted a proper Hollywood movie from us. Well, we couldn't do that as we have our own way of working and our own British-based sensibilities. DreamWorks wanted us to do what we wanted and

Puppet animators Nick Park and Peter Lord go Hollywood.



Director Peter Lord and key animator Merlin Crossingham set up a puppet for aerial brace work on the set of chicken coop stalag 18, British comic lunacy.

that's why we chose them to be in partnership with."

Although launching their deal with a Wallace and Gromit feature was discussed, Park decided against that idea because "We had made three half-hour shorts already (including *A GRAND DAY OUT* in 1989) and it seemed such a complete number and a good time to leave them alone for a while. Also I felt our first feature should be something more of an artistic collaboration between Peter and I, as Wallace and Gromit were always seen as very much my thing."

Wallace and Gromit fans need never fear though as Number three in their five-picture deal will indeed showcase those much-loved characters. The idea for *CHICKEN RUN* grew out of a doodle Park had drawn in one of his notebooks depicting a chicken digging under a wire-fence with a spoon. Noted Park, "Then I had this one-line idea:

THE GREAT ESCAPE with chickens! That was what we pitched to DreamWorks and we couldn't have hit a better note as co-founder Steven Spielberg said, 'I have 300 chickens at my home and *THE GREAT ESCAPE* is my favorite film ever.' So that was that. Those Prisoner of War escape pictures like *STALAG 17* are a nice mixture of exciting adventure, comedy romp and riveting drama and chickens are so utterly absurd and un-heroic that the chemistry between the two extremes seemed perfect."

Written by Jack Rosenthal and Karey Kirkpatrick (who scripted *JAMES AND THE GIANT PEACH*), *CHICKEN RUN* is set in a grim North Yorkshire farm in the early fifties run by the evil Mrs. Tweedy and her hen-pecked husband and tells the story of a group of chickens, led by heroine Ginger, determined to break free from their monotonous egg-laying routine. But every ingenious break ends in disaster and solitary confinement for Ginger, until all-American rooster Rocky crash-lands in the farm and who, in return for

shelter and being hidden from the authorities, teaches them how to fly from the coop. However, even as the hen-house inmates attempt to learn the impossible, the egg-count goes down and the Tweedys invest in a chicken pie-making machine with the intent of making Ginger their first baking experiment. And with time running out, the chickens launch their most daring and spectacular race for freedom.

With the vocal talents of Mel Gibson, Miranda Richardson (*SLEEPY HOLLOW*), Julia Sawalha, Jane Horrocks (both from the sit-com *ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS*), Imelda Staunton, Timothy Spall and Phil Daniels, *CHICKEN RUN* began shooting in October 1998 after an intensive two-year development period at the Aardman studios situated in Bristol's Aztec Park business facility. Lord said, "The story always had an outsider in it and when we met with Mel



“The ideal stop-motion puppet has big, fat legs & feet and a small body. A chicken has spindly legs, a big round body, beak & pointy head. A nightmare.”

—Co-creator Peter Lord—

CHICKEN RUN was going to be two-and-a-half times longer than a Wallace and Gromit short that making the feature would be two-and-a-half times as difficult. In fact, every problem was magnified at least 30 times because we had a lot more shots per minute and lots more texture in the story. There have been more plates to keep spinning in the air than ever. It hasn't helped, of course, that we chose the singularly most un-animator friendly creatures imaginable as the heroes of our first feature. The ideal stop-motion



Park and Lord found the creative freedom for their mad idea—a remake of *THE GREAT ESCAPE*, with chickens—at DreamWorks. Right: Tunneling into theatres nationwide June 23.

Gibson, who was a big admirer of our work, the character of Rocky fell into place. Making him American opened up a whole new story area we hadn't contemplated and took on the whole culture clash feeling of what actually happened when GI's turned up in Britain during World War II and made a big impact on the female population. He also gave us another language to play with as we could contrast this wise-cracking Yank with the very English demureness of the rest of the hen-house. We loved Mel in *MAVERICK* and saw Rocky very much in those character terms."

To meet the American opening date of June 23, 2000, the *CHICKEN RUN* shooting routine has been well regimented by Park and Lord. On a daily basis they oversee 30 separate units using the talents of 32 specially trained animators who first act out the scene in question themselves, use their movements to animate a video test which the co-directors then approve before it's finally committed to film. It takes ten days to film 17 seconds of *CHICKEN RUN* with the final running time hovering between 80

and 85 minutes. Park remarked, "We have been consistently rewriting the script as we've gone along and we are still doing so three months before our release date. But when we see the opportunity for more humor or drama we have to incorporate it. Peter and I had our favorite sequences we wanted to direct more than simply alternate shots. It's worked out that I've done all the chicken-related footage while Peter has tackled the Tweedys and the comic-relief rat duo of Nick and Fetcher. From Day One I insisted on doing the pie-making machine because I saw it in the grand adventure tradition of *INDIANA JONES* with the chickens having to avoid all the dangerous blades and grinders. I'm glad I did too as it has been such a relief to get out of the chicken farm! The major difference for me is that I haven't done any of the animating myself. I miss it and *CHICKEN RUN* has been an enormous learning curve in expecting other people to do something exactly the way you want."

Lord added, "It's funny, but we distinctly remember thinking early on that because

puppet has big fat legs and feet and a small body. A chicken has spindly legs, awkward little toad feet, a big round body, a beak, a pointy head and feathers. A nightmare! Our chicken design was a major deal initially and the look took six months to evolve."

No such problems will hopefully occur on the second of the Aardman features for Dreamworks. It's a new telling of the Aesop fable *THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE*. Park revealed, "Disney and other interested parties always expected us to choose an existing tale for our first feature entry but we wanted a custom-made one instead. Now we're ready to take a classic and find our own potential in it. The script is currently being written [by Karey Kilpatrick and Mark Burton] and the puppets are already being made. Peter and I aren't intimately involved in that as we'd be creatively exhausted. Once that starts going it will be like an express train and it will be impossible for us to get up to speed on it. So, after *CHICKEN RUN* is completed, and we've taken a long rest, we'll begin pre-production on the Wallace and Gromit feature." □

DINOSAUR

Disney's computer animation stunner, but will audiences buy talking dinosaurs?

By Mike Lyons

"No dinosaurs were harmed in the making of this movie," joked Baker Bloodworth, co-producer of Disney's *DINOSAUR* (set to be released May 19th). Indeed they weren't, but after audiences see the film, the studio is hoping that the end results will be real enough to make you question the ASPCA's involvement in the production.

"These dinosaurs are our actors," added the film's producer Pam Marsden. "They're not just effects in the film, they're not screaming, charging dinosaurs, in the way that we usually think of them. These are dinosaurs with personalities, emotions and motivations."

Disney's highly anticipated computer animated feature, the studio's first, opens in theatres nationwide May 19.



A family of lemur monkeys raise a young Iguanodon hatchling in a riff on *THE LAND BEFORE TIME*, rendered with all the drama and photo realism of CGI.

In what they're hoping will be a landmark to hang alongside *TOY STORY*, *WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT* and even *SNOW WHITE*, the Walt Disney Studio has invested a lot of time, and especially a lot of technology, to bring the film, and its stars, to life.

Through a combination of computer-generated imagery (CGI) and digitally enhanced live-action backgrounds, *DINOSAUR* tells an extremely naturalistic, *BAMBI*-esque tale of a group of dinosaurs searching for safety in an ever-changing world.

"Dinosaurs have been monsters in a lot of live-action films," said Ralph Zondag, who co-directs *DINOSAUR* with Eric Leighton. "In this film, we see that there's more to them." "This film is entirely set during the Cretaceous times," added Leighton. "Unlike *JURASSIC*

PARK, which had about 60 scenes with dinosaurs, we've got somewhere between 1,400 to 1,500 scenes."

DINOSAUR opens by introducing audiences to the prehistoric world through a five-minute sequence, devoid of dialogue (shown as an "extended trailer" with *TOY STORY 2*, last year).

The scene shows an egg, separated from its mother, landing on an island, inhabited by lemur monkeys. Aladar is the name of the young Iguanodon dinosaur, who hatches from the egg and is raised by a family of lemurs, Plio, Yar, Suri and Zini.

Meteors then devastate the island, causing Aladar and the lemurs to flee and join a group of misfit dinosaurs, led by the stubborn Kron, who are all trying to find their way to the safety of the valley and their nesting

grounds.

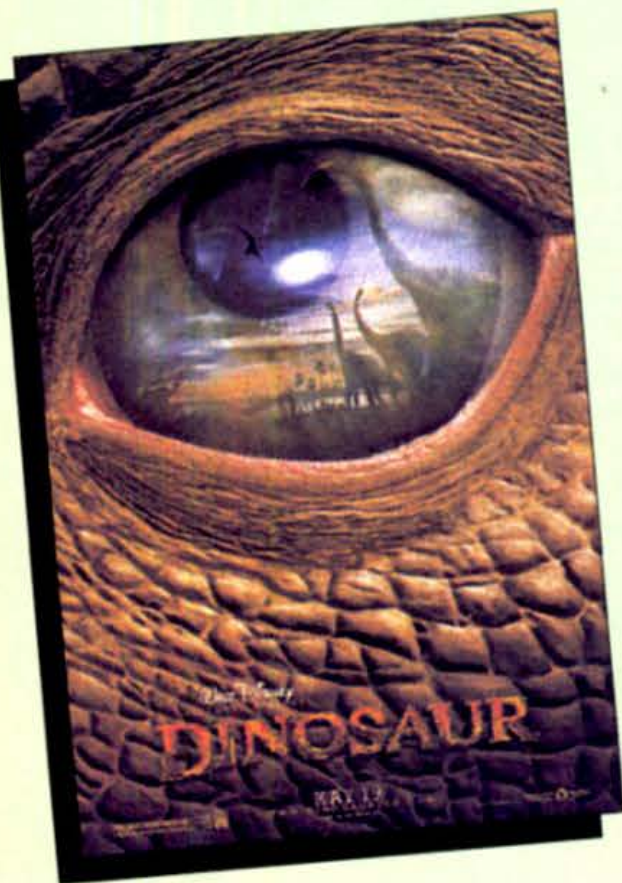
Along the way, there are obstacles in the form of rock-slides, raptors and Carnotaurs (a fictitious dinosaur beast that Disney has already been featuring in the "Countdown to Extinction" attraction at their Animal Kingdom theme park).

Like many of the studio's animated features, *DINOSAUR* has traveled a long road to make it to the screen. Originally slated to be brought to life, many years ago, through stop-motion, *DINOSAUR* first involved visual effects maestro Phil Tippett and that captain of carnage, director Paul Verhoven. "That version would have been a lot more violent," laughed co-director Leighton.

When that version never panned out, Disney turned toward the ever-expanding universe of computer animation, combining the digital characters with miniature sets. This idea was then scrapped, in favor of live-action backgrounds, in order to give the film a sense of heightened reality.

The filmmakers also toyed with the notion of having the characters speak only in voice over (a la the studio's live-action hit *HOMEWARD BOUND*). "That just wasn't emotional or engaging enough for these majestic animals," remembered co-producer Bloodworth. The dinosaurs in the final version now speak.

Once everything was securely in place, production, unlike any other, began. Essentially making two films, and combin-





JURASSIC PARK featured about 60 effects scenes, but DINOSAUR depicts the behemoths in close to 1500 scenes of National Geographic splendor.

ing them into one, live-action footage of landscapes was merged, in the computer, with the CGI dinosaurs

"We had to make it familiar to the viewer," said DINOSAUR's art director, Cristy Maltese. "We couldn't move color around to the point that images would be unrecognizable." For help in creating the vast, wide-open spaces in DINOSAUR, Maltese turned to the work of landscape artist Frederick Church for inspiration. "There's a translucent quality that Church had," noted Maltese, "what we kind of think of as prehistoric."

Since day one of production, DINOSAUR was also set to be the studio's most realistic animated feature. No "Hakuna Matata" showstoppers, these characters and their environments were going to be straight out of *National Geographic*. "That set a different set of boundaries," said Maltese, while co-producer Marsden added, "The nature of the story takes away a lot of common animation acting crutches."

For the animators, this meant the biggest challenge. DINOSAUR was not going to allow for any of the "squash and

stretch" freedom that usually accompanies the craft. These characters have to deliver a performance while remaining realistic.

"I couldn't use my usual tools," said Eamonn Butler, supervising animator for Kron. "When these characters talk and react, I couldn't use their body in a way that I could for a more humanized animal. We had to find ways to keep the creatures

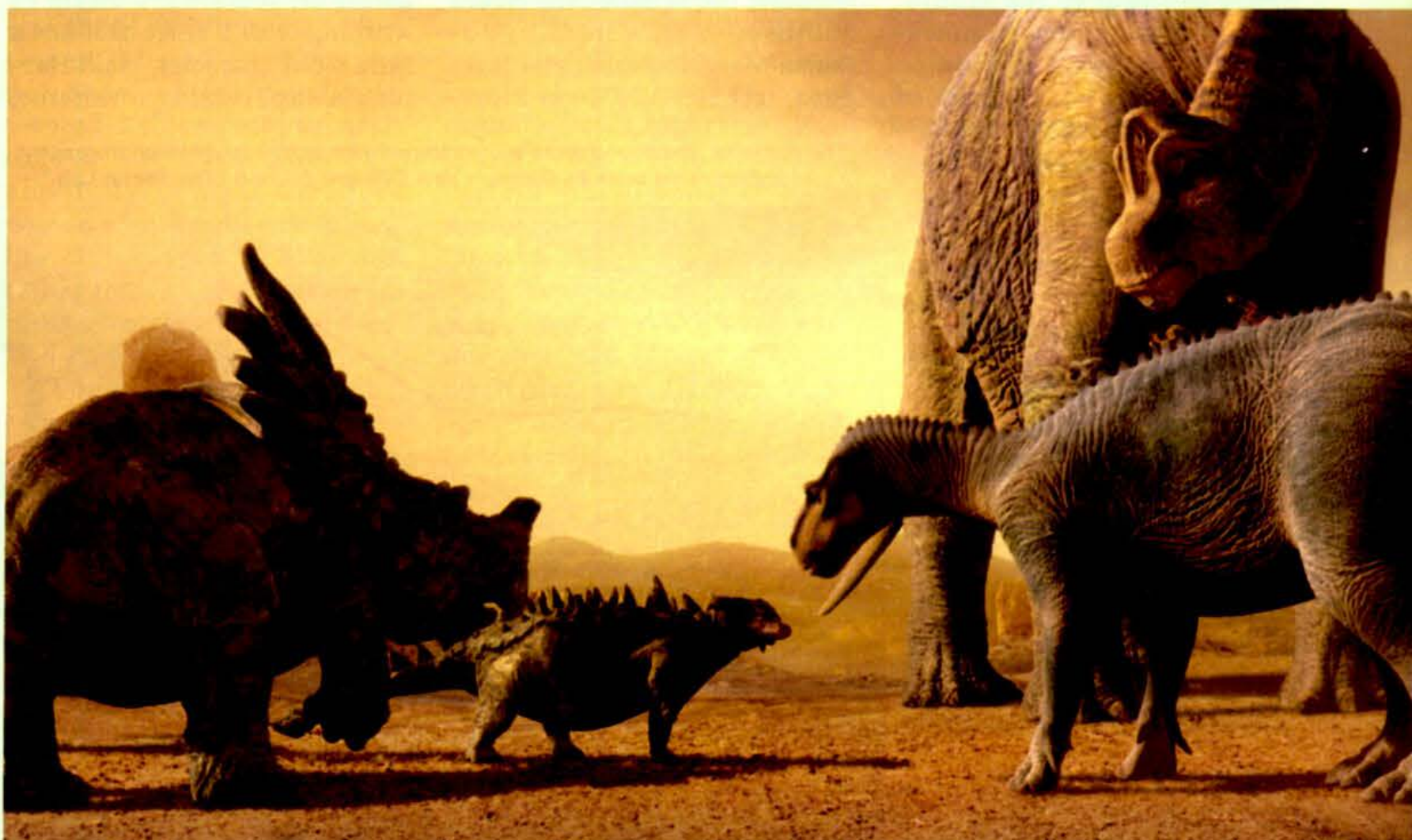
looking real and still communicate realistic and believable emotions and changes in their demeanor. It all had to be done in a way where you wouldn't question whether or not they were real dinosaurs."

Mike Belzer, who supervised the animation of two characters, Baylene, a giant Brachiosaurus and Url, an Ankylsaur, added, "We had to give the characters realism and

a certain amount of weight that you need to sell the believability of the character and yet still provide the entertainment for the film."

In fact, the challenge began even before production did. For the studio's other naturalistic films, most notably BAMBI and THE LION KING, the artists were able to actually observe the animals they would be bringing to life. Thanks to evo-

Aldar, the young Iguanodon, joins a group of dinosaur misfits in search of the safety of their valley nesting grounds.





Kron, the stubborn leader of the dinosaur misfits is voiced by Samuel E. Wright, who did the voice of Sebastian the Crab in Disney's *THE LITTLE MERMAID*.

“This is not a scientifically accurate film,” said co-producer Baker Bloodworth, “and we would never pretend it is. We are telling a story and taking creative license.”

right is Baylene and Della Reese is Eema the Styra-chosaur. As Kron, the leader, is Samuel E. Wright, most famous for his vocal performance as Sebastian the crab in *THE LITTLE MERMAID* and for his performance as Mufasa in the Broadway production of *THE LION KING*.

“He has this great stage presence and this great ability to project,” said animator Butler of Wright. “He’s also got great control over the sounds and the way he creates sounds. We asked all of our actors to create animal sounds, while we were recording the dialogue. He was doing a lot of roaring and shouting. We were getting worried that he might get hoarse, or lose his voice. He kept saying he was fine. It turns out he has this trick that he does, where he could vibrate the back of his palette and doesn’t use his voice box at all. All of that came from his stage training.” While all of the actors added to their digital counterparts, many involved cite noted British actress Joan Plowright, as the major force in bringing heart to the mammoth brachiosaur, Baylene. “As an animator, you always dream of working with a voice that has a little bit of character,” said Baylene’s supervising animator,

Mike Belzer. “Joan was all about that. There was just so much color in her voice.”

“We had been trying to cast this 100-ton character for a long time,” added co-director Leighton. “It went through a lot of phases. Once we put Joan’s voice to the character, it just came alive.”

The cast in *DINOSAUR* is not your typical one and the technology that brought them to life is indeed revolutionary. Equally groundbreaking for the medium of animation is the story the film tells.

“A photo-realistic dinosaur certainly has power to it,” said Leighton. “We wanted the story to match that as much as possible. We wanted a feeling of reality, of trueness, to the story. It’s certainly grittier than anything feature animation has put out before.”

DINOSAUR doesn’t even contain that familiar of all Disney animated archetypes, the clear-cut villain. “Initially, when I started on the picture, Kron was the obvious villain,” noted Butler. “As we got into the story, he became more of an obstacle character and more complex. He’s not totally evil, he believes that what he’s doing is for the best of the herd. I think the Carnotaurs and the environment that the creatures find themselves in is more of a villain.”

“Kron isn’t really the villain,” added Marsden, “he’s just the leader of a herd, who can’t adjust to the changes that the meteor wrought. He’s very much a soloist. Aladar comes in with the idea that as a community they can be safe. In a way, Kron is pretty sympathetic. He’s just doing things the way that he’s always done them.”

“Adapting, understanding that things can change and that you can get through it, as long as you’re open to it, is

lution, the *DINOSAUR* crew had no such luck. “We all wanted to take a ‘wayback machine’ for our pre-production trip,” laughed Maltese. “Instead, we looked at a lot of books and took trips to museums.”

“Many large animals, such as elephants, were used [for research], because of their sheer weight, size and scale,” said Bloodworth. “We were able to reference their movements in terms of how a 10-ton character would walk, stretch and essentially move. That was very significant.”

Not only did the artists observe elephants, but one was actually brought to the studio, where the artists and filmmakers were allowed to ride it. “That’s one of the perks of working at Disney,” said Belzer, “you’re animating one day and riding an elephant the next!”

Numerous paleontologists were brought in as consultants on the film, but co-producer Bloodworth knows that there are other dinosaur experts out there, just waiting to pounce on some of the liberties the film has taken.

“This is not a scientifically accurate film,” added Bloodworth, “and we would never pretend that it is. We are telling a story and we are taking creative license to make our characters interest-

ing. But, we know people are ready to tear us apart. In some sense, you do care about that, because it is someone’s opinion. On the other hand, paleontologists and scientists really don’t agree on what happened. History, here, is not entirely final.”

Adding to the creative leap of faith that *DINOSAUR* takes is the fact that the creatures talk. The cast includes actor D.B. Sweeney as Aladar, and, as the lemurs, Alfre Woodard as Plio, Ossie Davis as Yar, Hayden Panettiere (the young actress who was the voice of Dot in *A BUG’S LIFE*), and Max Casella as Zini. As the group of dinosaurs, the Iguanodons Neera and Bruton are voiced by Julianna Margulies and Peter Siragusa, respectively, Joan Plow-

The complex dinosaur effects are combined with actual location photography, groundbreaking work by Disney’s new CGI unit dubbed “The Secret Lab.”



probably the strongest theme that's in the picture," said Zondag. It's no stretch to find an analogy between the film's theme of accepting change and the fact that DINOSAUR was created by that most popular symbol of recent change, the computer.

"There was definitely a fear [of computers] for years, especially from animators," said Zondag, whose background is in traditional animation and, ironically, also in dinosaur-related films (he co-directed Amblimation's WE'RE BACK and animated on Don Bluth's LAND BEFORE TIME). "I think part of that fear was just not understanding it. I think what's happened is that technology has strengthened over the years. As it gets stronger, it starts attracting really talented artists, which make it that much better. The possibilities with it then become endless. It opens up a new door for storytelling."

"Making this movie was like jumping off of a cliff," added Leighton, who came to DINOSAUR via the handcrafted world of stop-motion animation. "I hadn't really touched a computer before this film and I'm not very good at video games, but it was a challenge and a good one. To me, that meant a potential for growth."

DINOSAUR even broke ground literally. While in production, Disney built a complete "in-house" digital studio to not only house the film, but also lay the tracks for future digital productions. "This whole studio, which has now been named 'The Secret Lab' at Disney, was built by and for DINOSAUR," said Leighton. "Hopefully, we've been able to set up a nice paradigm for the future."

Bloodworth added, "We had to do what no other filmmaking crew has ever had to do. We had to hire 350 artists, which took a year and a half. Then, we had to try and figure out how to make a movie that no one has ever made before."

Animator Belzer concluded, "It's an exciting time for animation, almost the SNOW WHITE time of computer animation. We're doing first-time efforts and to see the populous respond to that, has been thrilling." □

DIGITAL DISNEY

Behind-the-scenes of "The Secret Lab," ushering in a new age of filmmaking.

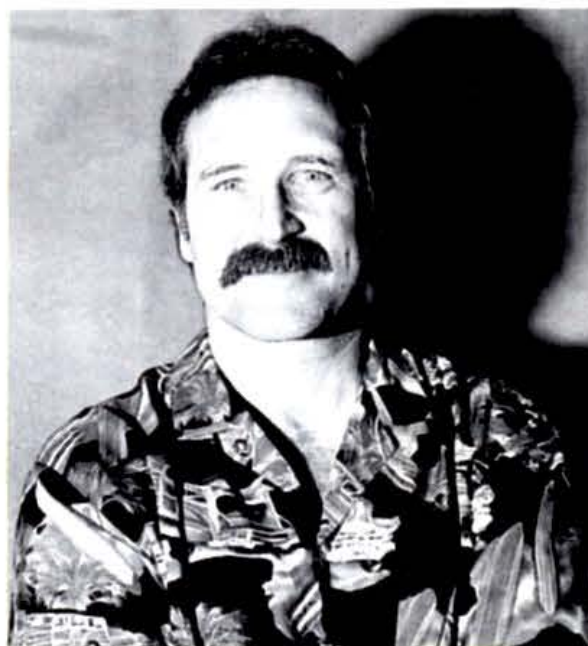
By Mike Lyons

DINOSAUR could give way to an unstoppable future for animation—and for Disney. Adding to the surreal quality of the film is the fact that its computer-generated images were combined with digitally enhanced live-action backgrounds.

Unlike Hollywood's last two dinosaur films (JURASSIC PARK and THE LOST WORLD), DINOSAUR doesn't just contain several scenes with the mammoth beasts, they're in every scene. This meant that everything in DINOSAUR came down to the details. Noted visual effects supervisor Neal Krepela, "Since every shot counted, they had to be a lot more seamless than a big effects extravaganza. In this film, you're scrutinizing everything, as part of the effect is the character."

Audiences will see such nuances as the flair of dinosaur nostrils, the quivering of dinosaur lips and a tear welling in a dinosaur eye. The film also breaks new ground for the realism of the dinosaur's skin. One of the saviors of the film was Sean Phillips, who implemented the computer program that allowed for more skin elasticity. "What we added was an additional layer of having skin moved by muscles, rather than by the bone structures directly underneath it," said Phillips.

Essentially, this meant that each of the major characters in DINOSAUR had their own, anatomically correct, muscle system built on the computer. Skin was then "shrink-wrapped" on this musculature. "The big thing we were looking to get was the secondary motion," added Phillips. "We observed and used a lot of video tape ref-



'Secret Lab' digital effects supervisor Neil Eskuri, "we were working with software that hadn't even gone out on the market yet."

erence of elephants and the big thing that really stood out was this secondary 'jiggling' of masses, when the character moves. We were also looking to get all of this to happen automatically, so that the animator wouldn't have to animate each muscle. We had so many shots in this movie that we needed something that was largely automatic."

As the film moved through production, technology continued to advance, as did DINOSAUR's visual effects crew. "We were working with software that hadn't even gone out to the market yet," said digital effects supervisor Neil Eskuri. "We would develop a certain functionality or technique, then there'd be a new cut and everything we developed wouldn't work. It was always two steps forward and one step back."

Essentially, DINOSAUR was accomplished using "every trick in the book," as Krepela said. Live-action footage of such locations as Death Valley were scanned into the computer and later combined with the digital images of the dinosaurs. "We had to think that the characters were always there," said Krepela of

the live-action scenes. "The photography and the location design had to complement that."

These live-action scenes were also "tweaked" digitally, with the addition of a background matte or even the combination of two separate location shots, to create a "virtual set" inside the computer.

Due to its scope, DINOSAUR led to some true "headaches" during production. "One of the biggest challenge for us was the amount of interaction the characters had with water," admitted Eskuri. "When you're looking at a character on the screen and it doesn't look the way it should, it can take you out of the moment."

Since CGI (computer generated imagery) first entered Hollywood lexicon, many have predicted that a film that's entirely digital was on its way. DINOSAUR has become the closest thing, so far. "There will be an all-digital film someday that has all human characters in it," noted Eskuri. "Things are only going to get better."

Noted Krepela of DINOSAUR, "A whole new realm has been opened and it 'ups' the believability quotient." □

Software designer Sean Phillips, who implemented new programs that gave the dinosaurs greater fleshy realism.



HOLLOW MAN

Director Paul Verhoeven on his update of *The Invisible Man*, starring Kevin Bacon.

By Douglas Eby

Director James Whale (subject of *GODS AND MONSTERS*) was renowned for his films of the Frankenstein and Bride monsters, and also the enduring classic *THE INVISIBLE MAN*, starring Claude Rains who spent the entire film living up to the title. Director Paul Verhoeven's new version of the story "about the horror of going too far out and not being able to get back" (as one review described the earlier film) may have similarities, but also some notable differences compared with the classic. In *THE HOLLOW MAN*, for one thing, star Kevin Bacon is visible through about the first third of the film, establishing his character as Sebastian Caine, and his colleagues, played by Josh Brolin and Elisabeth Shue. Sony opens Verhoeven's film nationwide July 28.

"This is a group of scientists, and you see what their characters are, what their relationships are, their animosities, their friendships, love situations," Verhoeven said. "For, say, 30 minutes, he's very visible. It's only past around page 45 that he becomes invisible. The essence of the problem is they can make him invisible, but they can't bring him back. It has worked on mammals, on apes, but somehow when they try it on a human being, who has a DNA chain that is slightly different, it didn't work. The second part of the movie is about what that does to him psychologically, what he becomes, what kind of strange things are accentuated in his personality that ultimately make him evil."

In the classic, Claude Rains was credited as "The Invisible One" and could be seen only because he gets covered from head to foot, in normal clothing, plus goggles, rubber gloves and bandages over his face. Caine, after discovering a kind of serum that renders his tissues progressively invisible, and finding that he can't return to being visible, wears a latex mask (which had to be glued onto Bacon's face) to keep from freaking out his colleagues too much. There are eye holes cut out so he can see, but anyone looking at him with the mask on sees



Verhoeven, director of science fiction hits like *ROBOCOP* and *STARSHIP TROOPERS*, tackles H. G. Wells' venerable concept of how great power leads to moral corruption.

through the eye holes to the inside back surface of the mask.

"That's why it's called *THE HOLLOW MAN*," Verhoeven explained. And the mouth of the mask is also cut out, he added, and "when he talks, his lips and teeth are invisible, so you can see the back of the head." Making Kevin Bacon invisible involves his wearing a green, black or blue suit, with matching color full contact lenses, and wearing a very tight fitting leotard. "If he has to do something complicated, like this," Verhoeven demonstrated, pulling the sweater he's had loosely draped across his shoulders up over his head like a scarf, "you're better off letting him do it. But then you have a green man sitting there, so what you have to do is paint the green man out, and to do that means you have to shoot it again without him there, so you can borrow

the background. Taking things out of a shot is, strangely enough, more complicated than adding things. If you take things out, you miss the background, so you have to restore it. *STARSHIP TROOPERS* was mostly putting things in, and the only problem you had there was all the animation."

Verhoeven noted he did not review the classic James Whale film to prepare for his new version of the story, but had seen it as a child. "I remembered it very well, because I was seven or eight, and it was great stuff at that time." One of the themes of both films is the moral consequences of the power you'd have if you could not be seen. Verhoeven read "a little bit of philosophical stuff," he said. "Mainly Plato, and in one of his books, *The Republic*, he talks about invisibility. An invisible person, in his opinion, would be suffering hubris, because he could do everything and get away with it, and that would make you evil. That's Plato, and that's basically what [screenwriter] Andrew Marlowe wrote. In eighteenth century writing, there are also stories of invisible people that become mean. That's really the philosophical theme, I think."

Asked about the tone of the film, Verhoeven said, "It's certainly psychological, because the relationships of the people are well-defined, and are just kind of interesting. In the earlier part of the movie there's this scientific experiment, and you clearly have these relationships. But you also have a fantasy element," he added, referring to Caine's discovery of the process to make himself disappear. "They make something up that's irradiated or whatever," Verhoeven explained, "and then get it inside him through an IV and he slowly becomes invisible. The skin disappears and you see all the muscular layers. He walks around a bit like that, like he's been skinned. So it's different layers that become invisible, the skin, then the muscular structure, the tendons, then the organs, the skeleton, then nothing is visible. And you see this happening, and he's moving a lot, because it's painful."

This group of scientists, led by Caine, are working in the traditional "secret govern-



Researchers Elisabeth Shue and Josh Brolin struggle to devise an antidote to save arrogant team leader Sebastian Caine (Kevin Bacon) from the dangerous side effects of his top-secret formula for invisibility.

ment laboratory" under contract to The Pentagon, which was shot for exteriors, but not used for interiors, as Verhoeven noted: "Ultimately I think they would only allow us in to shoot corridors, not rooms. We could have cut from a conference room, to a corridor, to the outside, but that seemed a little bit boring, so I felt it was nicer to convince the audience we really had been in The Pentagon, although the room will be fake, a studio copy of one of the conference rooms."

Verhoeven declared this was the best script he'd found since *SHOWGIRLS*: "It was well-written, the characters were very precise, and there was a lot of smart development in what you can do with this theme of being invisible. The writer, Andrew Marlowe, wrote *AIR FORCE ONE*, and this is a little bit the same in structure: What can you do in a plane? What kind of jeopardy can you have, how many moves can you have inside a plane? In *THE HOLLOW MAN*, it's mostly based in a big lab, seven people are working on this invisibility project financed by the military, a covert operation, and the lab is hidden, with only one shaft that goes to it, a couple of hundred yards underground."

The main idea, of there being a medical procedure that can render human tissue invisible, is definitely fantasy, according to the director: "And I can assure you we won't discover that in the next couple of million years. Well, I cannot assure that, because sometimes

you're caught, but from the scientific point of view, it seems to be nearly impossible. Light would have to pass through the body, and somehow go around all the molecules and reach the other side. With the wave theory, maybe there would be a solution, but it seems nearly impossible." He added that the film "talks a lot about quantum physics. I'm a mathematician myself, and I specialized at the university on these kinds of things. So I can tell you, it's the utmost nonsense. But, if you accept the premise that it will be possible to become invisible, then the movie is extremely realistic. The reactions, how they talk—it's taking into account just one impossibility."

While his body may be totally transparent from this scientific "impossibility," Caine otherwise responds to the environment in expected ways, Verhoeven noted, "If you pour water over him, you see the water cascade

“[The film] talks about quantum physics. I can tell you, it’s the utmost nonsense. If you accept the premise, the movie is very realistic.”

—Director Paul Verhoeven—

over the head. If you express him in another medium than air, you see his form: in water, in rain, fog, in smoke. There's a scene where he dives into a swimming pool and you see this human air bubble."

Verhoeven avoided any scene of Caine drinking or eating, "Because we're all very much aware that if he did, you would see it going down the throat. To see a piece of bread going down an invisible throat, I don't think that's really scary, or even tense. It would be funny." He also chose not to have the character smoke. "That makes the lungs visible, and it's very weird," Verhoeven said. "One of the big things that Andrew did in his writing is he avoided all these traps." A scene with the invisible character fighting a normal, visible one, could also have been merely comical, but "was staged so he was partly visible in some way: getting wet, or having blood splattered on him or something," the director explained. "You could see part of the face, or the hands." One movie Verhoeven cited as an example of how not to do it was *THE INVISIBLE MANIAC* (1990): "the guy went after the girls. They would be standing around and then suddenly..." he demonstrates someone getting pulled to the side by an invisible force. "I can't guarantee that I've avoided all these traps, but I've tried to do it in a way that would not be silly. That it would be at least erotic, if something like that happens. And it does: there is a sexual component there. He knows he can get away with everything, and he does a couple of things. That's the beginning of his evilness, I would say."

In addition to writer Andrew Marlowe, the production team includes director of photography Jost Vacano (*STARSHIP TROOPERS*); production designer Allen Cameron (*THE MUMMY*); costume designer Ellen Mirojnick (*BASIC INSTINCT*); editor Mark Goldblatt (*ARMAGEDDON*) and producers Alan Marshall (*STARSHIP TROOPERS*), Marion Rosenberg and Douglas Wick (*WOLF*). All the effects work is currently being handled by Sony Imageworks under the supervision of Scott Anderson. □

Verhoeven directs mad scientist Bacon, who donned colored form-fitting costumes to render all or part of his body invisible for the film's effects work.



THE ADVENTURES OF

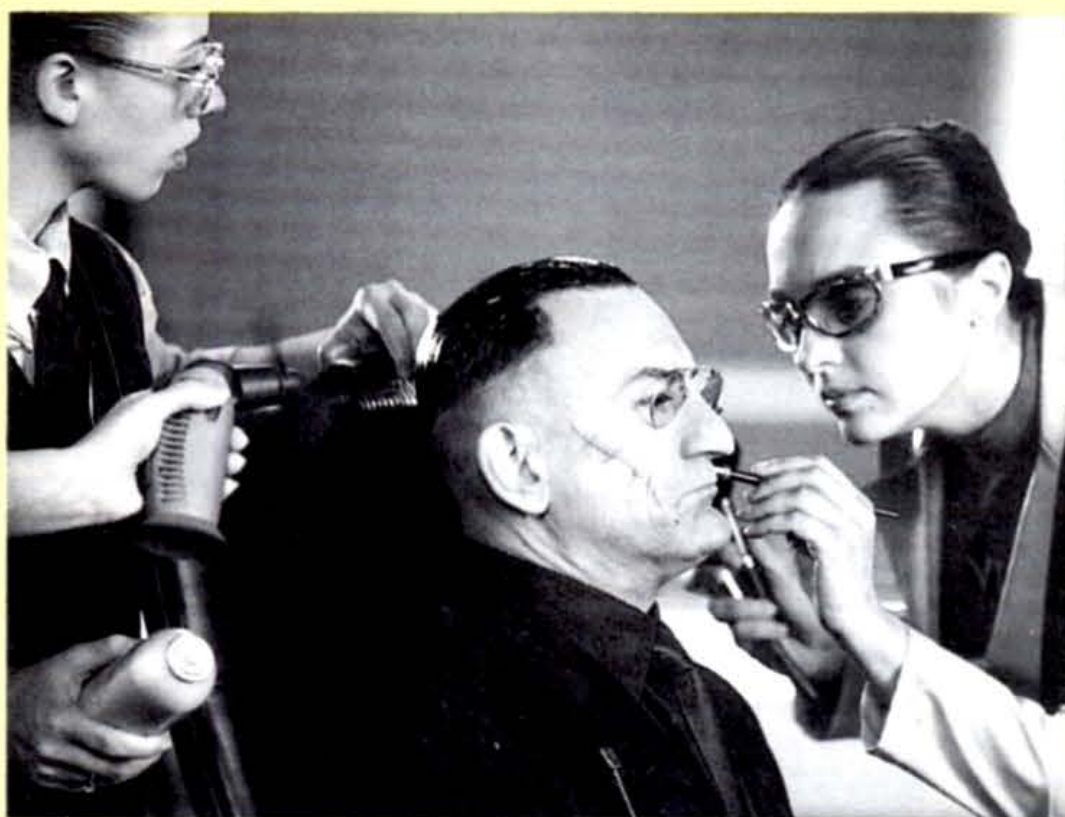
An audience on-set with Bullwinkle J. Moose

By Joe Fordham

Poised in the Noel Coward, raconteur style he epitomized in Bullwinkle's Corner, the moose star of *ROCKY AND BULLWINKLE* reflected on his recent rediscovery and the intervening years of incognito fame. While he and his airborne squirrel friend may have been out of the public eye in Frostbite Falls, Minnesota, the public's appetite for Jay Ward Studio magic has been maintained beyond the more obvious recent live action movie versions of Bullwinkle spinoffs, *GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE* and *DUDLEY DO-RIGHT*. "This is kind of an updated version of what we used to be, which was a satire on the old blood and thunder Republic serials," stated the moose, as he relaxed in his trailer during a break from filming outside Universal's Stage 16. "The present generation needs to be educated a little bit, but I think they're going to love it because they've had *THE SIMPSONS* and *REN AND STIMPY*. We were really *THE SIMPSONS* of our time."

Look for the "Jay Rated" connection. Bullwinkle J. Moose and Rocket J. Squirrel were created by Jay Ward and Bill J. Scott. Now the summer of 2000 sees the release of Universal J. Pictures *THE ADVENTURES OF ROCKY AND BULLWINKLE*, a live action/animated feature for Robert J. DeNiro's Tribeca Productions. The moose just laughed and confirmed his Pottsylvania nemesis is portrayed in the movie by flesh and blood performers with Jason Alexander and Renee Russo, literally zapping through from their former 2-D cartoon forms in the beginning of the movie to fill the shoes of Boris and Natasha. "I think the fact that Bob DeNiro is playing Fearless Leader is just a hoot in itself," chuckled the Moose. "It's his

"I just loved this idiot savant moose!" said producer Jane Rosenthal. "What's so special about him was he had this wonderful, child-like way of looking at the world."



DeNiro plays Fearless Leader, getting a much-needed make-over, and produced the live action cartoon adaptation through his Tribeca Productions.

production company, Tribeca, you know, producing this film. They've been trying to get this project off the ground for the last four years." My host leaned forward conspiratorially, lowering his voice. "My own personal feeling is it's been a stretch for him to play a cartoon character after being recognized for such heavy dramatics and villainous characters. It should be said that he has a great light touch."

A pounding on the door broke the mood. "Five minutes, please, Mister Moose!" A few more rapid fire questions revealed snippets of the Bullwinkle plot and confirmed the involvement of Tiffany Ward, daughter of the late, great Jay. We start in 2-D Frostbite Falls with our heroes receiving their latest royalty check from TV reruns. A call from Hollywood

ensues, wherein Minnie Mogul, studio head of Phony Pictures International played by Janeane Garofalo, proposes a live big screen adventure to be directed by William Biggershot (Carl Reiner), to help combat the rise of the insidious rise of a new network, Really Bad TV, run by a particular Pottsylvania with a harsh haircut. Our cartoon heroes ally themselves with agent Karen Sympathy of the F.B.I., played by newcomer Piper Perabo, as a bigger plot unfolds. Puns and hijinks abound, alas without the Metal Munching Moon-Mice or Captain Peachfuzz, although look carefully and you might spot a few familiar passersby and nods to the old 1960's show.

Pursuing Bullwinkle on set, I entered another world, a strangely too-perfect alternate

reality of bright, flat colors and simple lines. Director Des MacAnuff was busy by the camera, planning a climactic moment with Bullwinkle and staff from ILM. Amongst the busy crowd, a friendly face appeared. A tall, pleasant, educated Englishman introduced himself, sent over by the Moose, "Gavin Bocquet, production designer."

Hauling shut the towering sound-stage doors, Bocquet sealed us in behind the rafters that housed his latest creation, the towering set of the Fearless Leader's base of operations at RBTv, one of the many ports of call on Rocky and Bullwinkle's adventure. Bocquet handled similar duties for *STAR WARS*, *EPISODES 1 and 2*. "It's been nice to get my head somewhere else before I go back into the mad world of other planets, but I can't talk about that at all," he grinned. So what could he tell me of his work with the Moose?

"When I started, Des MacAnuff, the director, had some idea conceptually of where it was going but he was pretty loose about the look of all the sets," recalled Bocquet. "We've tried to give the film a stylized, caricatured feel, but not something that would throw the audience off. They need to know when they are either in cartoon land or in the real world with a little bit of feeling of the cartoon world. We've been quite neat and simple in our designs, but very bold with colors and big splodges of color. Rocky and Bullwinkle themselves were originally going to be created either with 2-D animation, like *ROGER RABBIT*, or totally 3-D, like *JURASSIC PARK*. They came up with a 2 1/2-D approach."

Bocquet detailed his experience with obvious glee before heading back to where action was hotting up on set with Bullwinkle stunt coordinator, Doug

ROCKY + BULLWINKLE

and a peek at his co-star, Robert J. DeNiro.

Coleman, and Roger Guyett, visual effects supervisor for ILM. Guyett spoke about his work on set with McAnuff. "Des is definitely keeping the feeling of the original cartoon, using very flat-on views, then you punch in for the closeup and cut back out; but it's also fun because Rocky and Bullwinkle are such great characters. I particularly love Bullwinkle and his complete mental lunacy, the way he moves and everything, it's almost like he has dislocated joints. He's pretty mad, you know. Dave Andrews, who's the ILM animation supervisor, has a great understanding of all that. He really is Bullwinkle."

The evening's shoot proceeded with repeated takes of Bullwinkle tossing purple-suited guards around the RBTB set. The lead Pottsylvania honchos did not materialize and the evening concluded with questions still unanswered. How, after all these years, has the big break come for the famous Moose? And how did Robert J. DeNiro fit in? Screenwriter Kenneth Lonergan added insight from his home in New York. "I wrote the original script for ANALYZE THIS and in 1992 I started a relationship with Tribeca based on that. About two years later, producer Jane Rosenthal asked me if I could think of a pitch for Rocky and Bullwinkle."

Lonergan, a man of dry, good-natured wit, a borderline baby-boomer born in 1962, based his recollection of the show on childhood memories of re-reruns and a process of reacclimation via video. His concept for the cartoon-within-the-movie-within-a-movie captured the original's self-deferential intent, launched the project at Universal and was awarded a "Jay rated" Ward seal of approval. As



DeNiro with Renee Russo and Jason Alexander as Boris & Natasha, and ILM's 2 1/2D animation of the '60s cartoon icons, kibbutzing with audiences nationwide June 23.

satisfying as the experience has been for the writer, who is now preparing his first directing project, Lonergan admitted it had been DeNiro's association that had hooked him. "The first thing Jane told me was she had a project for me and DeNiro was involved,"—he laughed—"It was not the first thing you'd expect him to be involved with." So, how come DeNiro? "You got me," said Lonergan. "I met him at the read-through and he was very nice, then I saw him walk by once. I said, whoa, it's Robert DeNiro. That was kind of thrilling."

The production was about to hit the road for its final phase of shooting, a road trip that follows our cartoon heroes across the nation to a showdown in Washington D.C.. Snatching a few minutes from her busy schedule, Rosenthal, the driving force behind Tribeca's juggernaut, found time to shed light on Lonergan's comments.

"I just loved this idiot servant moose! What's so special

about him was he had this wonderful, child-like way of looking at the world. Six years ago, my then-boyfriend, who became my husband, gave me the collected tapes of all the Rocky and Bullwinkle shows," stated the producer. "I'd loved them as a kid, and I found them just as entertaining as an adult. I thought, hmm, this could make an interesting live-action movie. Tribeca was not necessarily known for doing anything like this, but I was very tired of seeing all these dark, serial killer movies or gangster pictures every time somebody sent me a script. So the next time I was in L.A., I met with Tiffany Ward, then came back and spoke with Bob. First he rolled his eyes and looked at me as if I was off my tree. He wasn't familiar with the series. This was around the time Warren Beatty did DICK TRACY, Dustin Hoffman did HOOK and Jack Nicholson had appeared in BATMAN. Bob eventually decided it would be

fun to try a real caricatured character."

It was also Rosenthal's vision that answered one of the fundamental concepts troubling potential writers. "They couldn't understand why Boris and Natasha and the Fearless Leader would be live action, while Rocky and Bullwinkle were animated. That was a big question for everybody." The problem was answered by the film's all-seeing, all-knowing Narrator. "He just says he didn't write the movie," Rosenthal laughed. "I didn't want to see anybody walking around in a moose suit."

So, summer 2000, June 23, the original, one and only Bullwinkle J. Moose returns in his new revitalized cartoon form (voiced by Keith Scott), with Rocky (voiced by June Foray) and a cavalcade of new Hollywood friends (Garofalo, Reiner, Whoopi Goldberg, Randy Quaid, Kenan and Kel...).

A return visit to the Bullwinkle caravan revealed an idyllic if bustling and heavily guarded set in a corner of L.A.'s historic movie location, Griffith Park. The cartoon star was relaxing, nibbling a donut in the shade.

"You must never tamper with a classic character," confided the moose. "But there's a lot of recognition in this movie that the world has changed since we were in syndication. I watched the moose hurry off to join his squirrel co-star at the camera, where a fan ran forward from the crowd waving an autograph book and pen. "No publicity, puh-lease!" exclaimed the moose. "Help! I'm in dire J. peril!" squealed the squirrel. Security ran forward, but both superstars just laughed and signed, and one more happy fan went away, delirious. Rest assured, T.V. fans, Rocky and Bullwinkle are back. □



Don Bluth on animating Fox's teen science fiction adventure.

By Mike Lyons

With their animated science fiction feature, *TITAN, A.E.*, Fox Animation Studio is taking a bold step. No, it's not the fact that they're one of the David-like studios going up against the Goliath that is Disney. With *TITAN, A.E.* (due in theatres June 16th), Fox is attempting what has been heretofore impossible in animation: winning over a teenage audience.

"Our target, since we began, was to go after the hardest marketplace for animation: the 14-year-old male," said Gary Goldman, who co-directs the film with Don Bluth. "This is the audience who has divorced animation, until they get older, because they feel that they're not little kids anymore and their parents have only taken them to see animated movies. It's going to be a struggle, it's a hard market to try and crack."

Goldman and Bluth are animation veterans, who have created a string of popular films, since their defection from The Mouse House in the early '80s. *THE SECRET OF NIMH* (1982), *AN AMERICAN TAIL* (1986) and *THE LAND BEFORE TIME* (1988) are just a few of their 11 features.

In 1997, Bluth and Goldman directed *ANASTASIA*, their first feature for Fox,

which proved not only to be a success, but also that there was room out there for other animation studios. Since then, the two have also directed last year's direct-to-video sequel, *BARTOK THE MAGNIFICENT*, which centered on the wisecracking, sidekick bat from *ANASTASIA*.

"When we came to Fox," remembered Bluth, "one of the things that we all talked about was that we shouldn't try to be a 'Disney wanna-be.' We wanted to make a picture that's edgier, still reaches the family and goes a little further and even brings in the teenagers."

"What we're excited about with [*TITAN, A.E.*] is that we're doing something that you wouldn't expect from Don and Gary," added Goldman. "Our characters are not going to break into song, but there is an over-the-edge rock-and-roll score that plays underneath the action."

Set in the year 3028, *TITAN, A.E.* revolves around Cale, a young boy who is separated from his father, while the Drej (blue aliens who wear death-like hoods) attack Earth. After Earth is destroyed, those humans who escape (including Cale) are reduced to a small number of refugees and are now counted among the lowest forms of species.

The film then flash-forwards 15 years,

when Cale is working as a mechanic on a "third rate asteroid." "He's really at the bottom rung of the whole social ladder at this point," notes Bluth of the character. "There are only about another five humans on the same planet with him, the rest are aliens. So, he's been picked on his whole life and he's got a chip on his shoulder."

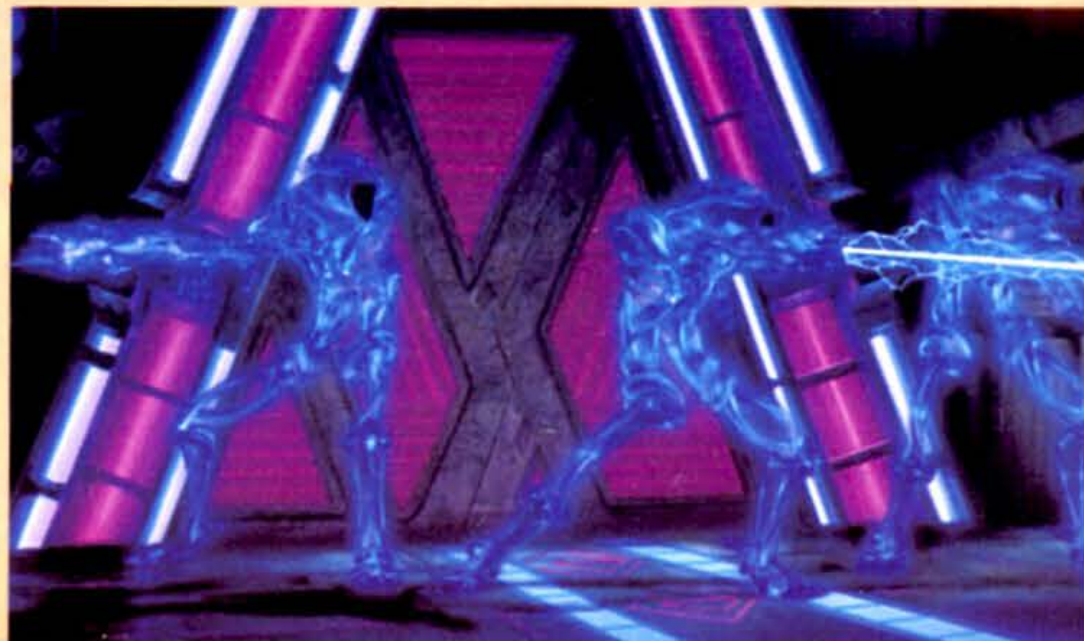
Joe Korso, Captain of the ship, the *Valkyrie*, discovers Cale. He was a friend of Cale's father and informs the young man that a ring he wears contains a map to the spaceship, the *Titan*. Created by Cale's father, the ship, which was jettisoned before the destruction of Earth, has the capacity to create a new Earth.

The Drej discover that this map exists and, in an attempt to prevent the human race from re-populating, try to kill Cale. The young, reluctant hero is then forced to escape with Korso, who then go on a search to find the *Titan* before the Drej.

"It's very faced paced," noted Goldman. "In fact we re-worked a few scenes to see if we could get some more comedy out of it, because it's a pretty intense film."

"We spent a lot of time drumming up ideas that had been done in science fiction and saying, 'We can't do that,'" said Bluth of fashioning *TITAN*'s story. "It was tough,

Cale (left) is the young hero who works on the asteroid, hot-dogging it EVA. The Drej (below), Earth's destroyers, seek to stop Cale from recapturing Earth's glory.





With Earth destroyed by alien invaders, a few of the last remnants of humanity work as lackeys on a third rate asteroid (above) after escaping the destruction of the planet on an ark ship dubbed the Titan (below).

actually. In some cases though, I think it does come close to the original mark."

"This movie is more character driven than hardware driven," added Goldman. "What we tried to do was give you images and designs that you hadn't seen before."

Computer generated imagery (CGI) plays a larger part in TITAN, A.E. than it has in many other traditionally animated features. Blended in with the hand-drawn characters are such computer created images as armadas of spaceships, the Drej army and explosion upon explosion.

"Sixty-five percent of this movie is CGI," added Bluth. "Some part of it, even if it's just a background, is 3-D. The 2-D and 3-D departments had to continually cross check with one another."

TITAN, A.E., like many big studio animated features, also boasts an A-list cast of voices, including Matt Damon as Cale. "Matt has made a tremendous effort with this film," noted Goldman. "When we'd bring him back for 'looping,' he give us the line, the way it



was written. Then, he'd say, 'Ya know, that's not the way I would have acted it.' So we'd let him do it his own way and he'd still make it work. He'll also listen to other lines he's recorded and say, 'I can do that better, too.' He's been extremely cooperative."

Bill Pullman (INDEPENDENCE DAY's President) plays Corso with Drew Barrymore as Akima, the tough and sexy co-pilot of the Valkyrie. "Corso is the swashbuckling type," said Bluth. "It's the kind of role that Burt Lancaster would have played and Bill Pullman rose to that challenge and did a really good job. Drew sort of bumps herself out of that sweet role she usually plays.

With Captain Corso (l), Cale's ring shows the location of the Titan, the key to recreating a new Earth.



"Our target, since we began, was to go after the hardest market for animation: the 14-year-old male. They feel that they're not kids anymore."

—Co-director Gary Goldman—

This time she's a kick-ass heroine."

And, as the Valkyrie's alien crew: Nathan Lane (Timon in Disney's THE LION KING) as first mate Preed, John Leguizamo (SPAWN) as Gune the navigator and Janeane Garofalo (MYSTERY MEN) as Sith, the weapons specialist.

Goldman remembers when such large casts and high-tech production values weren't even a glimmer of hope for TITAN, A.E. In fact, when the two first came aboard, the film still had its original title, PLANET ICE.

"Fox was working with another director before Don and I were brought on board. We had to come in when there was about a year and a half worth of pre-production work done, but no continuity—nothing on film. We used a lot of pre-production stuff that was created, but we had to re-structure. The big challenge has been that they've given us a specific amount of money and in order to do the project for that

amount, we had to complete it in 19 months. We had just gotten off BARTOK, where we had a low budget and had finished in 14 months. The crew had busted their butt. Then, we turned around and told them, 'Okay, now we have to do TITAN, A.E. in 19 months.'" Goldman then added with a laugh, "You could hear the screams."

Despite such an unorthodox schedule for an animated feature, Bluth noted that the thrill of making TITAN, A.E. was in the process itself.

"It's an extremely exhilarating experience when a movie begins to come together. You start with nothing. You then hunt and peck and hunt and peck; drawings are done and drawings are thrown away. It's like birthing something. As you get closer and closer to it, there's an amazing moment that happens, where the work starts to talk to you, it starts to tell you what it wants to become. By then, the movie is usually trying to grow and find it's own shape and form. There's just an energy that gets going. By the time you see the first trailer, you find yourself saying, 'Wow this is really something! But, it still always surprises me because, when you first start, you never think that this airplane will fly.'" □



BATTLE

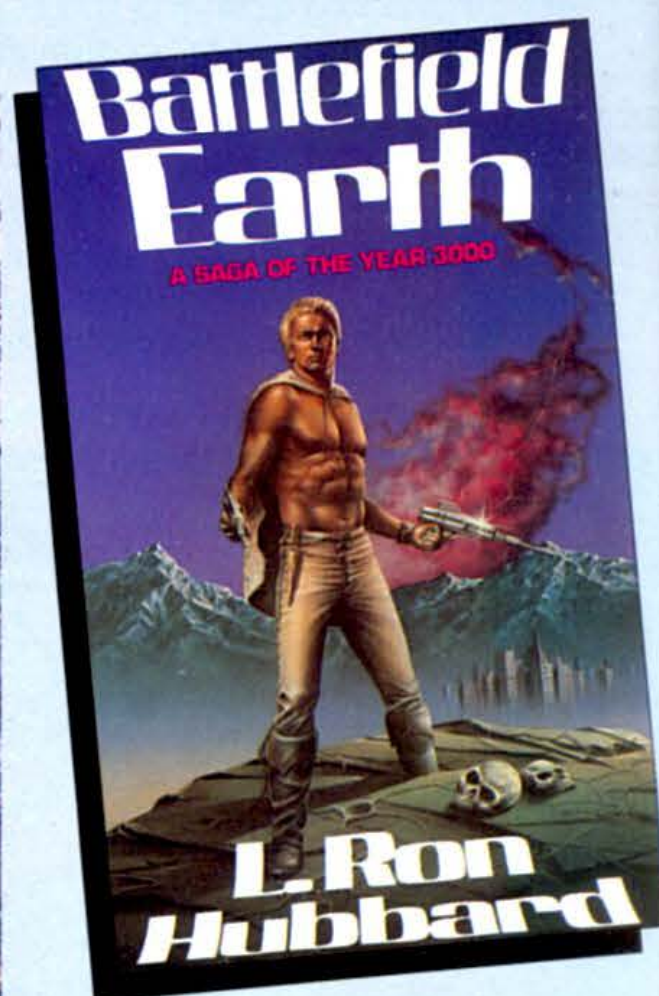
Superstar

By Dan Persons

Guess what? ID4 occurred, and we lost. Civilization was destroyed, the aliens took over, and the Earth was annexed as a not-very-promising source of raw materials for an interstellar mining firm. The pathetic remnants of humanity have lapsed—over a span of centuries—into abject primitivism. They huddle in caves or struggle for survival in crude villages, that is, when the aliens aren't hunting down and capturing them for use as slave labor in the mines.

Bummer. But not to worry, for all that is about to change. One of the alien overseers is about to make a grave error by under-estimating the indomitability of the human spirit; one of the slaves is about to discover that his bloodline was born for things better than groveling under the boots of lizard-like bully-boys. It's all packed into the screenplay for **BATTLEFIELD EARTH**, and when director Roger Christian was handed a copy, he seized the opportunity to assume the not-inconsequential task of translating

Travolta as Terl, a Psychlo plunderer of Earth, with Barry Pepper as Jonnie. Below: Human slaves mine gold for the Psychlos. Right: Hubbard's best-seller, a pet project which Travolta seeks to establish as an on-going film franchise.



FIELD EARTH

John Travolta shepherds L. Ron Hubbard.

the first half of L. Ron Hubbard's epic novel to the screen. Warner Bros. opens the film nationwide May 12.

"The book is basically the fueling ground for the movie," said the director, whose previous credits include *MASTERMINDS*, *NOSTRADAMUS*, and *STARSHIP*. "It's a huge science fiction book, the premise of David and Goliath, the hero's journey, clothed in a different way.

"The premise is that human beings have basically been obliterated by a planet called Psychlo, who mine and rule the universe. A few humans have survived who are living in wild cave regions and have basically forgotten their history. The Psychlos are mining the planet, getting as much as they can out of it until they abandon it. They treat the 'man-animals,' as they call them, as vermin that they just use for bits of manual work. So out of that rises a kind of hero—an anti-hero—with destiny calling, who rides out knowing there's more and gets trapped and captured by the Psychlos and put to work in the mines. He leads a revolution to defeat them and save humanity."

Warner Bros and Morgan Creek have joined forces to produce the film, the pet project of star and first-time producer John Travolta. The film is intended to leverage the big-thrill expectations of the *STAR WARS* crowd through a combination of high-ticket action and character-driven drama.

The late author L. Ron Hubbard was himself no stranger to drama. A contemporary of the likes of Robert Heinlein and Isaac Asimov, he'd made a name for himself churning out short stories for the Golden Age pulps, as well as producing several notable novels, including such surreal efforts as *Fear*, about a man searching for the

"It's basically a very real world, quite funny, but by observation, not comedy. You see the way Psychlos treat humans and by observation you can laugh at that."



Director Roger Christian and production designer Patrick Tatopoulos on the set in Montreal. Warner Bros opens the science fiction epic nationwide May 12.

lost hours of his life, and *Type-writer in the Sky*, in which the protagonist—in a scenario that predates by decades *THE PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO* and *PLEASANTVILLE*—finds himself trapped in the novel his friend is writing.

At the time Hubbard created *Battlefield Earth*, though, the author was gaining more attention for the mental-health theories espoused in his book, *Dianetics*, and the religion that those theories spawned, Scientology. Maybe nostalgic for his pulp roots, he came up with a one-thousand page novel filled with evil, alien invaders and the type of tongue-in-cheek speculative fiction that readers of post-war genre magazines had come to know and love.

In his long-format reconjuring of the Golden Age, Hubbard told the story of Jonnie "Good-boy" Tyler, a muscular primitive living a life of depredation and misery within a small village. Believing, despite warnings from his village elders, that something better lay beyond the limits of his world, Jonnie mounts his trusty horse and strikes out into the desert, unsure of what he'll find, knowing only that he has to find it.

What he discovers is far beyond anything his elders could have warned him about. Turns out his barren world was, cons ago, a thriving civilization that fell victim to a campaign of organized genocide by a race of merciless invaders, the Psychlos. Dispersing their air-borne

extermination drones around the Earth, the aliens reduced humanity to a handful of cowering primitives huddling in caves. The Psychlos—less a band of warlike conquerors than a society of back-stabbing, bottom-line-oriented bureaucrats—subsequently settled in to exploit the planet's resources for all they were worth.

Exploring the ruins of Denver, Jonnie stumbles upon and is taken prisoner by Terl, an egotistical Psychlo security officer who has his own plans for the remnants of humanity. Turns out that Earth is something of the butt-end of the Psychlo holdings, and that an assignment there is a virtual death-sentence for the career of any ambitious, status-conscious alien. Determined to break through the glass ceiling, Terl plans to use Jonnie and his village-mates to loot a vein of gold he's found in the mountains. Brought back to the Psychlo bio-dome, Jonnie is given a crash-course in his species' past via the "learning machine," a sort of esper-powered CD player, and simultaneously becomes acquainted with the present brutalities of Psychlo society via his captor (Terl lovingly calls his prisoner, "Rat Brain"). Slowly becoming aware that his own future and that of his species is gravely imperiled in the hands of these sadistic invaders, Jonnie resolves not only to escape from his warder, but to see the complete annihilation of the Psychlo presence on Earth.

While bits of Scientologist theology peep through *Battlefield Earth's* plotting—Jonnie's dramatic arc mirrors the path that Scientologists say humans must travel to escape the instinctual dictates of their "reactive minds," while the Psychlos are named to clearly reflect the religion's antipathy towards the field of psychiatry—the book is

BATTLEFIELD EARTH

JOHN TRAVOLTA

The star on turning producer, using his clout to get Hubbard's vision on the screen and cop a plum role.

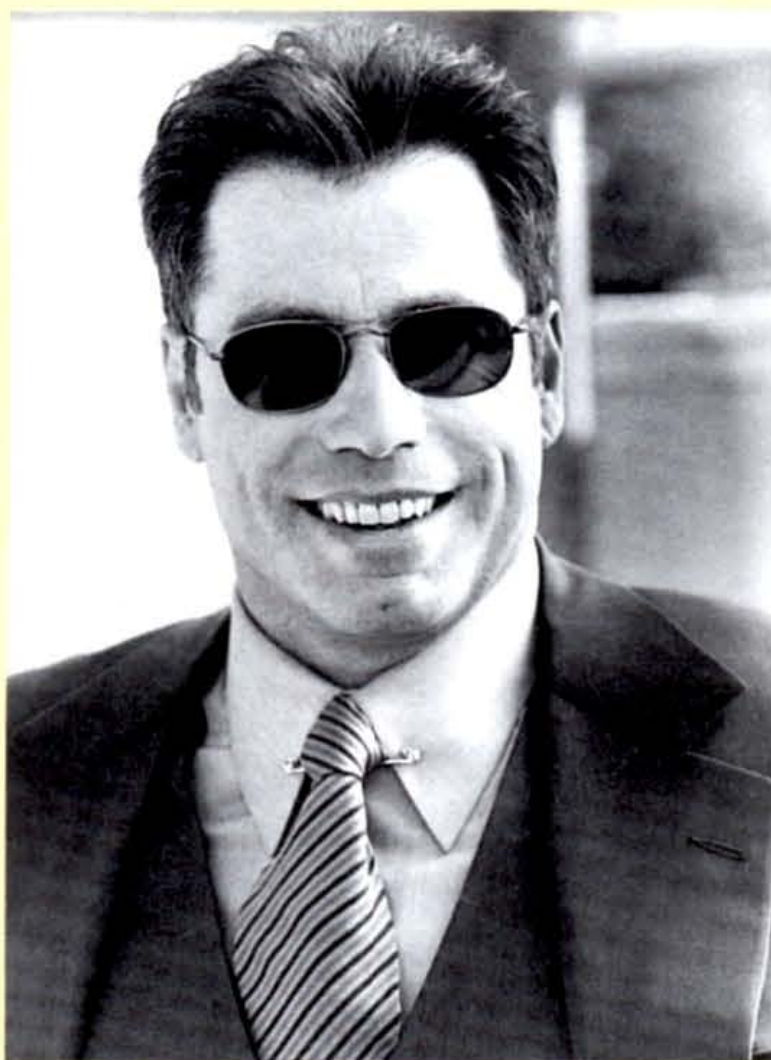
By Dan Persons

Stardom does have its privileges, but as BATTLEFIELD EARTH star and producer John Travolta discovered while portraying the Psychlo baddie Terl, it also helps to have co-star (and fellow villain) Forest Whitaker's makeup team.

"Forest Whitaker had the same [prosthetic] apparatus as I," the actor explained. "It's this extended head that goes about a little over a foot high, and goes back and shows some skull. And then there are the face applications: eyebrows, and a Fu Manchu kind of beard. All this was very time-consuming to apply and blend—on a good day it was about three hours, on a not-so-good day, when I had to take breaks to go to the bathroom or eat, it was four. Normally, this would not be tough, but my headpiece wasn't removable. It was attached so that I couldn't take a break, I couldn't get any air in there. I was suffering quite a bit.

"One day, I'm sitting on the set, and Forrest was there with [the makeup] removed. I looked at him and said, 'What the hell? How did that happen?' He had begged his makeup people over the weekend to figure out a way of cutting it off and putting a clamp thing on, where in between takes he could take it off. I went to my makeup and hair people and said, 'What's going on, here? Why does he have that and I don't? Get to the drawing board, ask his people, do whatever you have to do, but I would love to be able to remove this between takes.' Needless to say, they felt very embarrassed and they did a big pow-wow with his people, and then five days later I had the removable prosthetic, which was so thrilling. I just felt better about everything."

In fact, there's a lot that Travolta admits to feeling good about these days, primarily the fact that he's a top-line actor who has accumulated enough clout to garner studio backing for his long-dreamed-of adaptation of L. Ron Hubbard's epic novel. "It's been



Happy Days: top-line actor Travolta finally accumulated enough clout to get his long dreamed-of adaptation of L. R. Hubbard's science fiction epic before the cameras.

many, many years in the making," the actor/producer admitted. "When I first wanted to make it into a movie, we could not get a script that was viable. Mind you, it's difficult to capture the complexities of a novel into a screenplay in any case, but to tackle a one-thousand page book and try to capture all of it was impossible. The next best thing was to try to tackle half of it.

"I think there was upwards of, like, ten drafts. Finally, we got it right after all those years. Simultaneously, I was in a position in Hollywood where I could use the power I have now to move it along, where earlier, even if we had gotten a script that was great, I don't know if I'd have had the clout to get it made."

This, in and of itself, isn't a new story in Hollywood. Nor is it unknown for the actor who sets the wheels in motion for a particu-

lar project to also cast himself as the daring hero who sets everything to right on-screen. Here's where Travolta surprised everybody, choosing instead to play the scheming, avaricious Psychlo security officer Terl, the prime tormentor of BATTLEFIELD's hero Jonnie Tyler, played by Barry Pepper. "I've always had this theory about the characters that actors play," said the actor about his distinctly Travoltaesque knack of appearing at home on-screen whether his character is seeking the betterment of humanity or the destruction of all that is pure and good. "Actors are under this impression that you have to like your character. I never feel like you have to like your character. I think that you have to make your character entertaining. If you can find a way of being entertaining with your character, then already you've solved whether people like you. All people have to do is like watching it, they don't have to like the person and what he does. There's a lot of false data on how to create a character, and I just found it's very simple: what is the common denominator of all successful characters, whether they're evil or not? It's someone's take on it, rather than the actions of the character.

"That's the take I took with Terl. He's doing the most wicked things that any creature could do. He's an alien, so he gets away with it a little bit more, but more than that, he's so off-the-money in some ways, his inhuman qualities are so outrageous, that it's funny. His inability to empathize is so off that you go, 'Oh my God. This is hilarious!'

"He's a very theatrical character. I purposely made him that way, because I feel his arrogance. His sense of seniority is inflated to no end, and he just plays it to the hilt. He's so full of himself, with his power and his manipulations and his blackmail and his evil ways. And he thinks it's admirable, it's all inverted: he thinks these are really great qualities to have. It's more like



Rather than play the hero, Travolta surprised everyone by choosing the role of Terl, the avaricious Psychlo Security Officer, reveling in evil's theatricality.

a Shakespearean character in a way, because he's got all this going on."

And while most actors work their whole lives for just one crack at limning Richard III, Travolta holds that *BATTLEFIELD EARTH* contains its own scenes of defining villainy. "I love all the bar scenes; I just think they're very special. [Terl] has these discussions with a bartender, and I think they just capture this otherworldliness, yet it's reminiscent of things we're familiar with."

A long-time Scientologist, Travolta has become accustomed to questions about his perceived motives, but holds that people should not confuse the work of L. Ron Hubbard, Golden-Age author, with that of L. Ron Hubbard, personal-improvement pioneer.

"That's probably going to be inevitable, because of the obvious connection of the same writer. I'm expecting that there will be a lot of attempts to correlate it, but the success of the book was so big—five million copies, and it continues to be a best-seller—and the history of Hubbard as a science fiction writer is so prominent, that I'm hoping that the reality of that will just supplant that. His history as a science fiction writer is way before Scientology and Dianetics—he actually used his

monies from the science fiction world to finance his philosophy, and the research into that philosophy. You guys know that, now I have to educate the rest of the journalists about that."

But education, Travolta holds, is secondary. What is supposed to take precedence with *BATTLEFIELD EARTH* is a determination to deliver the summer thrills audiences have grown accustomed to, while blending in a character-based drama that's all too rare in such efforts. Summing up the experience, Travolta said, "It's amazing, really. I've never really done this with any movie before; I've never spearheaded a film. I've had passion for the different movies I've done, when I said yes, but I've never spearheaded a film that I've had a passion for. It's meant so much to me, because it's been so long in the making, that it feels really great. It's a new feeling for me, to be honest."

"There was a lot of hard work and a lot of people putting their best foot forward—absolute best foot forward. And we got something done. We got a great product, one that we're all very proud of, and one that I think will really entertain people. I think we've always wanted to be honorable to the book." □

"Hubbard said, 'Remember: overwhelming suffering.' That's the feeling of *BATTLEFIELD EARTH*, and how out of that can come liberation. It's dark versus light."

hardly holy writ. Long-winded in places, the novel still suggests that Hubbard relished the return to his Golden Age past. More importantly, in the juicy war-of-wills between Terl and Jonnie and the battle scenes that saw a small band of humans struggling against overwhelming odds, there was certainly enough potential for a rip-roaring, summer film.

Enter John Travolta. A passionate Scientologist since his introduction to the religion on the set of *THE DEVIL'S RAIN*, the actor had long sought to bring *Battlefield* to the screen. As far back as ten years ago, he was shopping the project around, eventually bringing in screenwriter Corey Mandell to adapt the first half of the book. It wasn't until the advent of *PULP FICTION* and the subsequent cancellation of a project meant to shoot in the summer of 1999 that the actor found himself with enough clout and sufficient time to finally tackle the project.

Warners and Morgan Creek knew a good thing when they saw it. They gave Travolta and Franchise Pictures co-producers Elie Samaha and Jonathan Krane (with Andrew Stevens and Don Carmody taking executive producer roles) the green light, with one proviso: deliver \$100 million plus of science fiction thrills for a budget markedly less than that magical, nine-figure mark (rumored to actually be about \$80 million).

For reasons of economy, the production chose to shoot in Montreal, a city with its own, thriving film industry, one well-suited to *BATTLEFIELD EARTH*'s requisite penny-pinching. Onto an international mix of high-level production personnel—Travolta donning the elevator skull-cap and platform boots of the avaricious, seven-foot tall Terl (the actor having decided that he was too old to play the good-

guy this time, and perhaps also realizing that the crafty, paranoid Psychlo was the meatier role); Canadian-born Barry Pepper punking up the part of hero Jonnie; Forest Whitaker waxing obsequious as Terl's assistant Ker; and, behind the scenes, Roger Christian taking the director's chair; director of photography Giles Nuttgens behind the camera; and Patrick Tatopoulos at the drawing board for the rare, triple-threat role of production, costume, and creature designer—would be layered a largely Canadian production team getting its first brush with high-ticket, tent-pole filmmaking.

The Long Point Military Base, located on the outskirts of Montreal, has hosted the production. Amongst the various bits and pieces that had to be fabricated by set decorator Anne Galéa wholesale from humble, Earthly materials was the full-size Mark II mock-up (built in the base's parking lot and subject, no doubt, to civilian speculation on how far

Sabine Karsenti as Chrissy, among the humans enslaved by the Psychlos who rise up to fight back.



BATTLEFIELD EARTH

ROGER CHRISTIAN

The STAR WARS veteran on directing the first of a planned Hubbard trilogy.

By Dan Persons

Set decorator of STAR WARS, second unit director of THE PHANTOM MENACE, and a director in his own right with credits such as NOSTRADAMUS, Roger Christian has television, in BATTLEFIELD EARTH, the biggest challenge of his career. Christian marshalled this big-budget production in Montreal, which is standing in for the ruins of Denver. "We're in new territory," said Christian. "Nothing like this has been made in Montreal, ever. We found the locations that work; quite unique locations, actually."

"[We're shooting] here, and about four hours out in the mountains, where we went for the primitive beginning of the movie, where Jonnie's tribe lives. Apart from that and certain points where they're mining gold in deep ravines, it's all here."

"It was terrible weather the first week of shooting, but it worked for us because they've got primitive skins and they live in caves and we were doing love scenes and big action scenes. Rather than being a kind of sunny, happy world, it needed to be pretty grim. And it fused all the costumes, the look of the film; it made it much stronger. So in a way we welcomed it, we just shot through it."

When Christian wasn't contending with the elements, he was back in the editing room, making sure that the film—being cut even as the shoot continued—not only flowed, but met the approval of BATTLEFIELD



Christian directs in Montreal, from STAR WARS set decorator to PHANTOM MENACE second unit director, to big-budget auteur.

co-star and co-producer John Travolta. "We're all totally, completely in tune, with one vision. It's amazing. Our instincts are identical. The journey has been one of complete harmony."

"John is cutting with us. I wanted him to—he's in the cutting room helping to fine-cut as we go. John, the editor and I have the same agenda. The scenes are just getting better and better as we do it. [Travolta's] eye comes in and then mine comes in—John is a very intelligent and very thoughtful human being; nothing that he does is borne out of ego. He's just serving the film, serving what's right. He has such a clear understanding of it—and it's matched by our own understanding of it—that it's made it possible for us to do this huge movie. His contribution to this

is enormous, absolutely enormous—he's got a passion for it; it is one of his favorite things. And it's infectious to everyone. He's loving it; he's having such a great time."

That's probably a good thing, because Christian is already making plans for the BATTLEFIELD EARTH sequel: "That goes even bigger, because Robert the Fox comes thumping in and then war is raging on Earth. And then about 18 alien races come down as well, challenging and posturing and wanting, because Earth is now free. Plus a human has learned the secret of teleportation, and they can't quite figure out how that's happened—teleportation is the power of the universe; if you can shift goods between planets, you've got the power. It's only been the Psychlos who've had it, now a human being's done it, and there are a lot of underpinnings, deep, deep stuff there."

"There's a lot of philosophy that comes in—it's all set up in [the first film]. It's only on a simple level, this first one, but it comes into the second one. There's huge action in the second one, but Jonnie also learns how to be...the Dalai Lama, if you like. There might be two more [sequels], there's a lot to go. There's a gigantic sequence in the book that is just amazing and that would start the next movie, and that's quite a big sequence. So it may be enough to go through on three of them. There are very interesting aspects of it to come." □

the military had advanced with aviation technology); office suites fit for a Psychlo (including four mega-sized chairs and what Galéa referred to as a "funky desk that worked on steam and dripped oil"); and an organic, egg-like learning chamber with a weird, retro-industrial mental-tap headset—the product of a previously exterminated race known as the Synchlos (or, depending on who you asked, the Clinkos, the Glinkos, or the Synchos—anything other than the less salutary "Chinkos" used in the novel). "It descended and opened and is completely engineered from found parts," said Galéa of the automated mental jack. "Pieces of lights and gears and all kinds of things that you'd never recognize. It was really a work of love."

And then there was the menagerie. What in the book was described as an abandoned, open-air cage with an algae-encrusted pool used to imprison the lone Jonnie, became in the film a mammoth, vaulting prison with oversize statuary and vast, multi-level cages to imprison hoards of human slave labor. Said art director Oana Bogdan, "The idea was that you'd see the humans so small and up high in the air. It's trying to give you the feel of the London Zoo, or something that's already existing, but it's also just the contrast: we as humans used to put animals in cages, now the Psychlos have put us in the cages."

"It's one of the best sets," concluded Bogdan. "It's one of the places that's outside the [Psychlo] dome, so everywhere that you're outside the dome, there's green and breezes and plants invading the structures. When you're inside the dome, because it's filled with the Psychlo gas, there's no greenery at all. It's all pretty much dead, brown, dying, concrete." That contrast can also be seen clearly in the film's other, major set: Terl's office, a dingy, grey concrete redoubt built to suggest that the aliens have set up shop in the caverns of a mammoth dam. Rimmed with stories-high arches and dangling chains, the space resembles nothing so much as a dungeon as conceived by a joint collaboration between the Marquis DeSade and the Tennessee Valley Authority.

BATTLEFIELD EARTH's

“I was in a position in Hollywood where I could use the power I have now to move it along, where earlier, I don’t know if I’d have had the clout to get it made.”

main sets were located in a giant warehouse facility on the base (the main feature of which was a giant sign with the intriguing legend: “If you hear the bell ring, go immediately to the ration depot. Someone is trapped in one of the freezers.” Guess real soldiers don’t use inside latches.) Step through a door and walk down a short corridor, and you wind up in design central, a plain room plastered practically floor-to-ceiling with concept drawings, photo collages, character designs. On one wall are images of a ravaged shopping mall (the human escapees who stumble upon this site mistake its mannequins for victims of Psychlo genocide), on another is the design for a suitably grungy Psychlo bar, complete with gaming tables and a dispenser for the all-important Kerbango (BATTLEFIELD’s onomatopoeitic moniker for the Psychlo beverage of choice).

On the other side of this wall stands the office of designer Patrick Tatopoulos. It’s been a busy few years for Tatopoulos, what with working on creature designs not only for STUART LITTLE, but on David Twohy’s startlingly good PITCH BLACK and Walter Hill’s SUPERNOVA. Nothing, though, could match up with the workload for BATTLE-

FIELD EARTH. “What’s exciting to me,” said the designer, “is when you have a chance to create a world and its inhabitants. The fact that we have to create characters that would fit their technology was the most interesting part. The very beginning is always the most fun; when I sit down in front of a piece of paper and sketch. Then the headaches start. We start to realize we’ve got a budget to meet, we’ve got to make it work. That’s the challenge part of the job.

“Usually, [at the start], I never think budget. Even if I have a budget, I don’t think budget. I think that’s a big mistake. If you take a movie knowing that it’s a \$20 million movie and you design a \$20 million movie, then you’re going to have a \$20 million movie. If you don’t care and just design something great and then try to make it work, you go a little further.”

Going a little further was Tatopoulos’ eternal quest on BATTLEFIELD EARTH. With his responsibilities extending beyond design of the creatures themselves, he began thinking of the world the Psychlos had built for themselves: “We’re

Walk softly and carry a big stick: Travolta as Terl and Forrest Whitaker as Ker. The size of the Psychlo codpiece proved to be a design bone of contention.



A dead Psychlo guard gets a makeup touch-up on the set during filming. Massive boots were used to add stature to the aliens, making walking difficult.

talking about a group of people who, in our way of thinking, have no aesthetic whatsoever; they just do practical stuff. But just doing practical stuff can be interesting or it can be extremely boring. What I thought would be interesting was to make all their stuff, all their work, very square—angles and things—but when you look at the full piece it’s actually quite organic. With the choreographed gears and stuff, it starts looking very organic, like a bug. That dictated the entire Psychlo world.

“I’m a very free-handed guy. I don’t try to work the technical things. I just let go, completely. On every design I’ve done on every show, the first phase has to be like that: Don’t think too hard, just let your mind go.

“Of course, we knew they were seven, eight-foot tall. We

knew they were very military, very stiff. Those things were the key elements for me. The designs which are typically Psychlo are reminiscent of the Second World War, Nazi stuff. There’s a lot of that in there, actually.”

Tatopoulos’ original conception of the Psychlos got modified by Christian and Travolta. “When I designed it, I did a profile version of [the aliens]. The first drawing looked like this guy with a huge forehead, but there was no forehead, just hair. It looked interesting; it looked alien with the hair and that huge forehead going back. The first question from Roger Christian and even John was: are people going to be able to understand that there is a forehead underneath; it’s not just a cool haircut. In my mind, even today, I like the hair better than showing



Canadian actor Barry Pepper as Hubbard's hero, Jonnie "Goodboy" Tyler, enlightened to humanity's enslavement by the learning machine, with Ker.

“The beginning is always the most fun, when I sit down in front of a piece of paper and sketch. Then the headaches start. We start to realize we have a budget to meet.”

and deal with the weight of them. That was more our issue than actually falling.”

In fact, Tatopoulos held that not only did John Travolta take his newborn stature in stride (get it?), the actor also dared to venture where others feared to tread (okay, I'll stop now). “When John came in, suddenly I realized that when you have a real actor in those boots, something else happens. He's been dancing for years; when he started to move, he created movement that was very different from the stunt guys.”

When Travolta's attention then turned upward, to the Psychlo visage, it was to put a similarly distinct stamp on the design. Said Tatopoulos, “The design I did, he loved. Then we started to apply it to his features, and we worked on it. It was actually pretty easy all the time, but the thing is that we kept developing it. The thing that you see on film came from the very strong involvement of John. We developed it together: the hair change, making it more like dreadlocks. The look that you have of John on screen comes by way of his [direction], it's part of creating his own character.”

Tatopoulos, though, does take credit for one unique, and quite literal, wrinkle in the Terl costume: the alien's prodigious cod-

piece. Acknowledging that the dimensions of this leather-encased member would be enough to inspire Catherine the Great to skip the stables for a night, the designer also held that biological consistency required the final product. “The codpiece started on the original drawing, then it became [bigger]. Proportionally speaking, it was a very interesting thing: John was wearing the costume without the boots, and this thing was massive. He said, ‘I don't think it's working,’ and I said, ‘Put the boots on, we'll see.’ He put the boots on, and everything worked.”

“It's really very animal-like. If you're doing a big beast, something really powerful, and you give him nothing there, then it's an issue. So we kept pushing it, pushing it. Seeing it in the movie, though, it doesn't become an issue. If this was too small, it would attract as much attention as if it was too big. I think it blends with the character, that kind of beast-like, Aryan monster.”

Not everyone in the BATTLEFIELD EARTH crew was worrying about the relative dimensions of alien phalluses (and were probably glad for it, too). A few steps from Tatopoulos' office,

Building the ruins of Denver at Long Point Military Base, outside Montreal, for green screen effects filming of rebel Harrier jet attacks on the Psychlos (inset).



the forehead. I was worried about Klingons, the STAR TREK stuff. I don't think it turned out that way, but that was something that was requested, and I said, ‘Okay, we're going to spread the hair.’”

When Tatopoulos wasn't debating hairstyles, he was hashing over footwear; more specifically, how you rig boots to render normal-sized humans into super-deluxe-sized Psychlos. “The first thought was not to consider any budget issue, and we thought we'd do CGI, create a cool-looking character which would then be either CGI or blue-screen and composited as a separate element into the picture. Then we could have 10 foot, 20 foot [aliens] or whatever we wanted to do. When we realized we couldn't go that route, we had to make them practical. So the size boost changed from ten feet to seven. Why seven feet? Because the proportion of the body can only be stretched so much without making it look strange. I think we went to the very limit by just making a strap-on extension. Humans had to walk on these extensions. So most of the actors ended up being a foot taller than they were, and that's why we looked for some guys who looked alien to begin with. You get a guy who's seven-feet tall, now he can be eight-feet tall. Meanwhile, people like

John Travolta, could be maybe smaller. This was dictated by the size of the lead actors, who are usually smaller than some generic extra. We decided that the big guys are the most creature-like; they're the heavy-labor guys. The more refined they are, the smaller they are, and the more human they look.”

Tatopoulos was quick to point out that—despite persistent rumors that the film's top Psychlo had encountered some mobility difficulties in his lift-shoes—it wasn't necessarily true that the smaller you were, the harder you fell. “Nobody really fell,” said Tatopoulos. “Some people couldn't walk properly. What would happen with those boots, being quite heavy, was that you had more of hard time lifting them than actually falling. You were pretty stable, overall. I would say it took a bit more time to develop the actual choreography and have the guys train with the boots



graphic artist Jean Francois Mignault labored over a computer rig, whipping up pre-visualizations of sequences, settings, and modelwork for the edification and enlightenment of everyone from the director to the DP to the editor. Patrick Tatopoulos had originally hired Mignault as an illustrator, but had changed his mind and decided to go with another artist. When director Roger Christian got a look at some of Mignault's computer animation, he decided to give BATTLEFIELD's "pre-viz" suite to the Canadian artist.

Mignault slid a cassette into a VCR. On a monitor screen, a preliminary version of the film's finale flashed to life; an amalgam of computer-generated flybys, static storyboard images, and bits and pieces culled from other movies. In rapid sequence, we saw Will Smith from INDEPENDENCE DAY, Sylvester Stallone from RAMBO, Mark Hamill from RETURN OF THE JEDI. We got a sense of driving action, an appreciation of how cutting will work to make the ending as kick-ass as possible. Such work has gone to a generally appreciative audience: one special effects house used Mignault's rough of a MATRIX-like tracer-bullet effect to create the finished footage; a helicopter pilot employed pre-viz's of a Colorado mountain fly-by to understand the movements needed for the background plates being shot; and DP Giles Nuttgens discovered through Mignault's mock-up of the teleportation site that the elements as originally laid out wouldn't play on-screen.

The dingy facade of an actual, working steel mill used as stand-in for the outer limit of the Psychlo dome. A concrete platform had been laid out, marked with obscure, alien hieroglyphs and flanked by two cylindrical towers. Crew members worked to assemble a life-size version of the Mark II, not far from the control bunker that overlooked the entire site.

This was the Psychlo teleportation platform. In the film, it stands just outside the Psychlo dome (indeed, a massive, alien-sized doorway appended to the mill is the same one used for Terl's office—more budget-shaving recycling). It was also

BATTLEFIELD EARTH

PATRICK TATOPOULOS

The production, costume and creature designer on nailing Hubbard's vision.

By Dan Persons

It's not often you get to see one person carrying the titles of production, costume, and creature designer on a single film. In fact, according to BATTLEFIELD EARTH's Patrick Tatopoulos, you've never seen that particular credit in an American film. "Truly, in America, it's never happened, period.

"But just to be a bit more modest about it, in Europe, it's been done before. I'm a huge fan of the Italian moviemaking school. At the time of Fellini, for example, the designer was one guy designing sets and costumes and potentially the look of the characters as well—we're talking makeup. He wasn't necessarily applying makeup and going that far, but he was creating the look. The best reason for someone to be the only designer on a picture is to improve the chances of putting down on paper the vision of a director."

Directors have been relying on Tatopoulos' unique vision for a healthy portion of the nineties. It was his production and creature designs that caught the public's imagination in such films as Roland Emmerich's INDEPENDENCE DAY and Alex Proyas' DARK CITY. And it's those same talents that have been set to work creating the ravaged Earth of several millennia hence and its alien conquerors in BATTLEFIELD EARTH. "It's the perfect script for a designer," said Tatopoulos. "There are so many layers, so many things going on in this movie, that I thought it



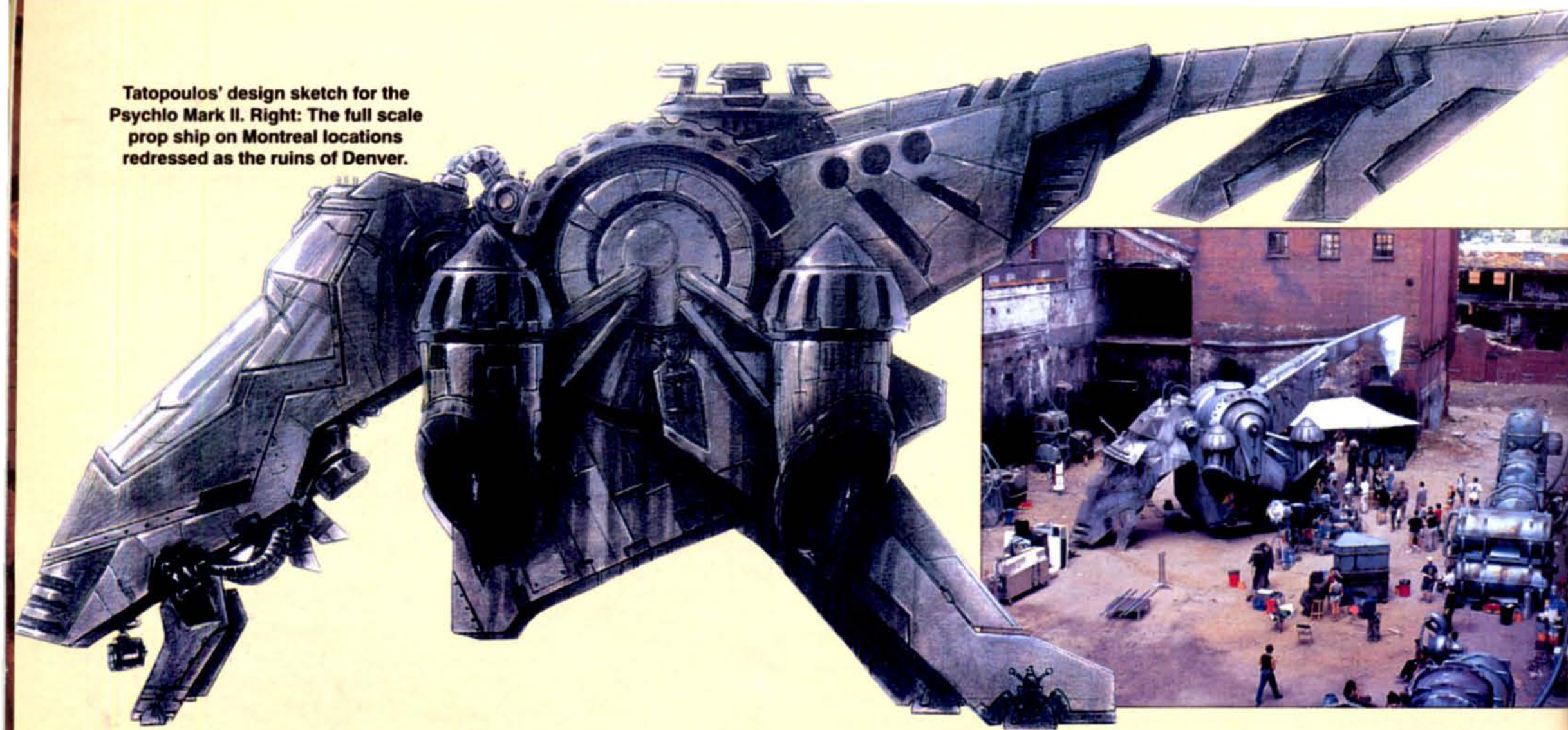
Tatopoulos' sketch of Jonnie and Terl. After toying with the idea of using CGI to create the alien Psychlos, the production settled on practical makeup solutions.

was very rich in design.

From the beginning, of course, Tatopoulos had little more than a piece of paper to resort to, and a design instinct that traces its roots back to the designer's time as a student in Parisian art schools. "I have... well, I don't know if it's a French approach, but it's an approach that's based on the aesthetic. There's a designer called Sid Mead, he has a ten-

dency to come up with shapes—he has this quick, sketchy thing where he comes up with an interesting shape that he likes, and then works with it. My approach is more towards that. I develop something that looks interesting, and say, 'Now, let's make this thing work.' So once you've got the object, the element that you like, you come back to it and you make it functional.

Tatopoulos' design sketch for the Psychlo Mark II. Right: The full scale prop ship on Montreal locations redressed as the ruins of Denver.



But the first phase is to come up with something that surprises people, otherwise you have a tendency to repeat yourself.

"You need to come up with a signature first, a flavor. When I start designing a movie, I don't start with little sketches for every set. What I do is design maybe one object for the movie. I draw it, and in this object, if it works, you can determine what a lot of the movie will look like, texture-wise. STARGATE, for example, the look of the warriors—I designed their helmets—and the texture of their helmets and the color ended up being the reference for doing the sets. It was the look that created the rest of the stuff. I don't apply myself everywhere when I start designing, I grab an object which seems to be a key object—

Conferring on set with art director Oana Bogdan, a regular design collaborator since STARGATE.



could be a spacecraft or anything. I design that, get a flavor, and then suddenly there's a language that develops there, and that language is something that you can now apply everywhere."

In the case of BATTLEFIELD EARTH, though, Tatopoulos forewent using something as exotic as an interplanetary spacecraft for his inspiration, settling instead on something a little more prosaic. "It was a portion of [the Psychlos] furniture. There was a desk that they use in the movie that was a standard thing that's a part of their technology and is actually such an important thing. That thing basically determined everything."

"We're not talking about a standard desk that you'd find in an Earth office. It's something very special. It's a huge object, and there were enough shapes and elements in it—there were lights, there were screens—that it would help you to understand their technology. So there's this technology and around that technology is a shell, and that shell has a texture as well. So you get the texture, you get the type of technology, you get the lighting—you get the cultural elements that they use. And that desk could now become something else; it could become a spacecraft or a wall panel."

Realizing he may have oversimplified his own development

process, Tatopoulos quickly added, "Don't think that everything looks like a desk."

Because of Canadian labor law mandating the use of local talent, the designer found himself in Montreal without the bulk of his regular staff. "The only person I brought was my art director, Oana Bogdan," he said. "She's been working with me pretty much since STARGATE. She's fantastic, the kind of person you have with you who becomes your right hand. My creature shop did the actual makeup effects for the movie, but again it was the situation where I could only keep one of my guys to supervise the makeup effects and apply them on John Travolta. The rest of the crew was actually hired at the last minute in Montreal. Fantastic people, no argument—the stuff came out great."

Tatopoulos has since moved on, although he is loathe to reveal what his next project might be. ("It's the early stages of something that could be very, very big...Something with people I have worked with before," is about the only hint he'll drop.) Beyond that, though, the designer admitted that he's not contemplating surrendering his double-hyphenate status anytime soon, and that he's in fact toying with the thought of what his expanded responsibilities might lead to.

"For me to go back it would

have to be a project that I'm dying to do—for example, the sets, or I'm dying to do the creatures for. Right now, I'm going to have to keep convincing people that I can do it—it's not that anyone's been convinced yet; people have to see the movie to see if someone can handle all of that. It's not yet the situation where I can say I'll be able to do it the way I want to do it."

"If there is a world to create, that's what I'm interested in. I'm not interested in just makeup effects, per se—that's not what I want to do. I will never be like Stan Winston. I'll never be Rick Baker. I don't want to be those guys. I admire them so much, but I don't want to try to match them. My job is somewhere else, and if it leads me to a certain extent to directing... you know, the more tasks you take, the more you show you want to have control over the look and what's happening in a movie. That's probably where I'm going. I wasn't very conscious of that, but I think it's taking me slowly there. We all think we have something to say, and the more tools you're given to say something and to help someone, the more you want to have the chance to do more, to put something together that's your piece."

"The joy is that it's a world of creation. That's what gets me excited." □

where a fair chunk of the film's finale would take place, which explains the pock-marking and blaster-burns that suggested the aftermath of a pitched battle. After shooting, the alien dome and miniature energy spheres will be matted in to complete the scene.

Director Roger Christian is no stranger to genre filmmaking, or to challenging production conditions. He's previously helmed projects as varied as *STARSHIP*, *NOSTRADAMUS*, and *MASTERMINDS*, and traces his *STAR WARS* resume as far back as his set decorator post on *A NEW HOPE*, all the way to his second-unit direction of *THE PHANTOM MENACE*. "My background," the director said, "is very involved in special effects and blue screen and the kind of gritty reality that I put into *NOSTRADAMUS*. [It's a] kind of fusion of idea [and effects.] Because I just finished on the new *STAR WARS*, I have the experience to pull off a film like this with a budget that's a lot less than a studio movie. That's basically how [*A NEW HOPE*] was made—this is *deja-vu* to the first one."

Taking on a project with far darker overtones than those from the Lucas universe, Christian acknowledged his desire to stay true to L. Ron Hubbard's vision. "It was his idea that this would be the first of his books ever filmed," said Christian. "They gave me a very interesting piece that he had written to whomever was going to direct this. He said, 'Remember: overwhelming suffering.' That's the feeling of *BATTLEFIELD EARTH*, and how out of that can come liberation. It's dark versus light, again.

"It's basically a very real world, quite funny, but funny by observation, not comedy—you observe the way that Psychlos treat humans, and by observation you can laugh at that. We took the same route that *STAR WARS* takes, if you like: the world is absolutely, one-hundred percent reality. It's grim in places, nothing is that kind of comedy science fiction. Within our world are huge flying ships and domed cities, but it's all

"[It's a] fusion of ideas [and effects]. Because I just finished the new *STAR WARS*, I have experience to pull off a film like this with a budget less than a studio movie."



Travolta as the 7-foot Terl with wife Kelly Preston in a cameo as Terl's Psychlo secretary. Noted Travolta, "We've got a great product that will entertain people."

practical. You can imagine that everything could work. We then established these Psychlos as well, with their makeup and their prosthetics, and the look of them is quite frightening in places, but fun. It's a gentle line to tread, but that's where we've gone with it."

Travolta himself might not be treading so gentle a line with Terl, who may be destined to join the pantheon of the actor's so-bad-they're-good villain portrayals. "He's one of the screen's great villains," said Christian, maybe forgetting his own time with the grown-up Anakin. "They're basically eight-foot, nine-foot high, and kind of beast-like. They're human beings without any social graces, without any redeeming qualities about them. Their pleasure is to torture, mentally and physically, themselves and other beings. They'll always come up against each other, and then, once they've got [each other] down, they'll put the boot in; put the knife in and twist it. It's the way they operate.

"They're so unique that they leave you wanting more. We're adding in escape scenes:

they've domed the city of Denver over, because they can't breathe earth's air; they need their own atmosphere. So we had a great opportunity to do something there with the Jonnie character. They've said, 'He's so uncontrollable, just get rid of him.' So they throw him into the domed city and they're betting on him, how long he'll last until his lungs burst. This leads into a kind of huge, action scene as he's running through the city and through a massive smelting plant, basically kind of dying as Psychlos are trying to get him."

Against this well-armed and technologically advanced adversary is pitched *BATTLEFIELD EARTH*'s Jonnie Tyler. As described by Christian—in terms that reference a bit of Scientology theology—the hero's voyage is as much spiritual as physical: "An extremely appealing aspect of this is human beings discovering their past, which is in a way their future. Jonnie goes through the learning machine, and he realizes what the truth is, and what the possibilities are. That in itself is something that heroes always understand at some point. You

start out reactive to situations: you can go along with a situation as it exists, or you can become active yourself, mentally, in which case you take a presence in your own destiny. He takes that giant leap: he can read, he's finding libraries where all of the truth resides, military bases underground that have survived because they've been sealed. It's led to this terrific kind of arc between these primitives who are being led by this man who's telling them that maps helped him to escape. They're just chewing meat, not understanding what he's talking about, but they all slowly come through this learning curve, so the journey taking place drags you along."

Warners is no doubt hoping that the audience will not need to be dragged into the theater in the first place. *BATTLEFIELD EARTH* hopes to leverage the same pre-Memorial Day vibe that Universal's *THE MUMMY* enjoyed last year. (With the only other film opening May 12 being *THE FLINTSTONES IN VIVA ROCK VEGAS*, the studio may well get its wish.) For director Christian, the ride won't be worth the effort unless the audience connects with a genuine, human element. "There's no getting away from it, I think. That's what determines it—you have to have a kind of sense of growth in a human being. One of the big joys for me in the film is really related to that, very strongly. Jonnie has a group around him: Carlo and Nicky and Sammy and Mason and Heywood. They go on this journey together, with the rest of the people, and it's become incredibly emotional. As they've learned about themselves, we've had these really magical scenes between the characters. They're very poignant; I was very pleased. The actors that we've managed to cast have brought this level to it. Human dilemma, human suffering, are-they-going-to-win? that always leads to a more interesting arc to follow. That's very strong in this.

"To me, this is what I'm so joyful about. It is totally character-driven. For a big sci-fi movie to have that at its core, that's always a winner." □

THE FLINTSTONES IN VIVA ROCK VEGAS

Director Brian Levant on returning to Hanna-Barbera cartoonland as live action.

By Frederick
C. Szabin

Remet the reduxed Flintstones late this April in Brian Levant's follow-up to his 1994 live action hit, that put flesh and blood to the Hanna-Barbera cartoon characters. Not only is there a new, younger cast portraying the Flintstones and Rubbles this time around, but we're given the chance to see how these four pop culture icons met and fell in love in *THE FLINTSTONES IN VIVA ROCK VEGAS*, which details their meetings and romances, ending with the taking of prehistoric vows.

For this prequel we are offered British actor Mark Addy (*THE FULL MONTY*) as Fred, Stephen Baldwin (*BIODOME*) as buddy Barney, *THIRD ROCK FROM THE SUN*'s Kristen Johnston as poor little rich girl Wilma Slaghoople, and *ALLY MCBEAL*'s Jane Krakowski as Betty O'Shale, Barney's future intended. Also featured are Joan Collins as Wilma's mother, taking over for the first film's matriarch, Elizabeth Taylor; Harvey Korman, a frequent voice contributor to the original animated series and the voice of the Dicta-Bird from the first live action film as Colonel Slaghoople, Wilma's dottering father, and in two roles is British thespian Alan Cumming first as The Great Gazoo, Fred and Barney's alien genie, and Mick Jagger, leader of the rock band, The Stones.

It's been six years since the first film failed to wow critics,



Recasting for a younger audience, *THE FULL MONTY*'s Mark Addy plays Fred Flintstone (r) and Stephen Baldwin plays his prehistoric pal Barney Rubble.

but did please the bubble gum set who dragged their parents to it. A sequel was always in the hearts and minds of director Levant, Universal Studios and Amblin Entertainment, but was not to be until the fortuitous 40th anniversary of Bedrock's finest this year.

"The main problem was that we had a script the studio and Amblin liked," said Bart Brown, *VIVA ROCK VEGAS* co-producer who worked his way up from producer Bruce Cohen's (*MOUSE HUNT*) assistant on the first film. "There were thoughts that when it was written that we would bring back the original cast, and John Goodman specifically was not interested in doing another one. Although he enjoyed making the first film he felt he had done that, been there, and wanted to move on from that point. So we started looking in-

to casting the next Fred Flintstone, and, believe it or not, that's quite a feat. With many an actor who was interested, unless you could capture that essence, it was just a guy in a Fred costume. It became trickier than we thought to find someone who looked the age and the role. To replace John Goodman was tough because John was well-liked in that role. We thought what if we take a different approach and put together an ensemble cast that's younger—maybe that would make it a little hipper to a wider audience—and tell the story about how they all met and fell in love. That gave us the liberties to go to a whole new group of people, and once we were able to go to a younger age group, it was still a challenge until Mark Addy—which sounded like such a random choice—had come up and

read, and he just blew everyone away. He is the essence of Fred Flintstone and Jackie Gleason's Ralph Cramden combined. He just brings that same charm in a very different way from *THE FULL MONTY*. He just has something so incredibly endearing about his personality that he brings to the screen as Fred Flintstone. From the moment we had our first roundtable reading everyone just sat back in amazement at how he nailed the American back-east accent and, two; how he just won over everyone at the table. We were really very fortunate to get him."

"We couldn't be more thrilled," added director Brian Levant on his chance to finally bring the Flintstones back to the live action realm. "What's really been great is that we came back and everyone involved loved the first one and really felt that it would have to be a totally different experience to do another one. We half-stumbled, half were guided by the comedy gods to a prequel, and once in our initial prequel discussion with Deborah Kaplan and Harry Elfant, who wrote the script, we asked what if we do a prequel; 'What if we start with the wedding,' and all of a sudden they looked at each other, and I forget which one of them said, 'What if we ended with the wedding?' And out of that concept all of a sudden we had ourselves a big fun romantic comedy. What was Wilma's story? Well, she was a very, very rich girl who runs away down into Bedrock and meets

DIRECTOR BRIAN LEVANT

“What’s really been great is that we came back and everyone involved loved the first one and really felt that it would have to be a totally different experience to do another one.”

about to give up I had an idea when I saw my assistants playing with the Adobe Photoshop in the office. What we did was go over to wardrobe and get a helmet, a cape and some green tights and stuff, had a friend pose in it, took a still frame, put it in Photoshop and tried then to shrink and expand different areas of his body until they ap-

size like two to three percent depending on the shot, but we really did get him virtually the same size and proportion as in the cartoon. Then there was the issue of his face. We were so fortunate to cast Alan Cumming. This guy is just unbelievable; he won the Tony Award for *CABARET* on Broadway, he’s doing Shakespeare, he’s in *EYES WIDE SHUT*, and we got him. He plays two roles in the film, Gazoo and Mick Jagged, leader of The Stones, and in both roles he’s wearing very heavy prosthetics.”

The Henson Creature Shop was the film’s overall effects designer. Noted Brown, “They would hand over the design and we would take those to Rhythm and Hues or the other effects houses, so we wanted to have a consistency in terms of overall look. They had come up with a look for the Great Gazoo, which we had signed off on prior to coming back up as a prequel. When we did come back up as a prequel Brian had spent more time thinking about it and he had mentioned the fact that we were going through all this effort again of taking a cartoon and bringing it to life, and he felt that in order to really do this character justice it really should be the same feeling, as opposed to making him a 3-D character, which is in a sense like keeping him animated. It would be wonderful to have the old-fashioned, good old performance from a live actor, take that and recomposite him in a sense that can make him look only alien-like, so that there’s no way he can be human.”

Aside from the green-faced alien genie, the Henson Creature Shop and Rhythm and Hues were called upon to give audiences a baby Dino, freshly hatched with the personality of a frisky puppy.

proximated the size of Gazoo’s proportions on the show, which means you have a head probably three-times normal size, and a torso from neck to where your legs start that is just smaller than the head. “Then the arms and legs were practically skeletal, and very short with the huge feet.

“We showed it to Rhythm and Hues and did a test against a blue screen with a man on a flying rig. We showed it to Steven Spielberg, who said, ‘Smaller! Smaller!’ [Levant laughed], and he was right. We had him too big. He changed

CG character. I liked the idea of interacting with somebody. That’s why in many cases we use puppets, not just for financial reasons, but so the actors could be holding them, interacting with them. I think it’s just different than playing to things off screen. And so we tried the puppet/CG method, and it was very, very expensive and we didn’t want to lose Gazoo out of the movie. We knew during the first one that if we ever made another, Gazoo would have to be in it, and it was just a matter of how in the hell are we going to do this? As we were just

Levant, a life-long *Flintstones* fan and collector who directed the original film for Steven Spielberg’s Amblin, rehearses a shot with Addy and Johnston.



Joining Addy and Baldwin are *THIRD ROCK FROM THE SUN*’s Kristen Johnston as Wilma (l) and ALLY McBEAL’s Jane Krakowski as Betty, in a comedy prequel that tells how the couples met and wed in Rock Vegas.

up with Betty O’Shale, who’s a roller skating waitress. (You try making roller skates without any boots! But we made a lot of ‘em!) Eventually they meet up with Fred and Barney. On the first date out, Fred is going out with Betty, not Wilma, and things get all aligned and we show how Wilma got her pearls, and where Dino came from, and we meet Fred’s rival for Wilma’s affections, Chip Rockefeller, played by Thomas Gibson.”

One member of the original cartoon’s cast missed the first time around was the magical alien, The Great Gazoo, stuck on a prehistoric Earth to help our two favorite dunderheads, Fred and Barney, sometimes making their lives a little better, but usually complicating things royally. When Gazoo was added to the mix, they not only gained one of the more entertaining characters from the series, but one of the biggest technological challenges the special effects house, Rhythm and Hues, ever took on.

“At first,” said Levant, “we looked for something that would not be entirely a



CO-PRODUCER BART BROWN

“To replace John Goodman was tough because he was well liked in that role. We thought what if we take a different approach and put an ensemble together that is younger.”

About 20 CG Dino shots were created for wide angles, while most of him was fabricated by the Henson shop so that the actors, once again, would have an on-set being to relate to, a full-bodied puppet that the actors not only got to hold but actually manipulate themselves (with help from facial servo operators off camera), rather than just the neck and head/CG body of the full grown Dino of the first film. A stunning Bronto-bridge, a Bronto-roller coaster (an image Levant got off the back of a box of Fruity Pebbles Cereal) and various small animal appliances also decorate the prehistoric world of the Flintstones.

Most of the film was shot in the 30-mile studio zone of southern California, including the old cowboy locations at Chatsworth, Rocky Peak State Park and Paramount Studio's old movie ranch. One day each was spent at Vasquez Rocks, and Page, Arizona (for background plates), and then it was back to the old quarry used in

At the craps tables in Rock Vegas, the comedy comes complete with Ann Margret singing the title song.



the first film. Preproduction took the better part of a year through 1998 and 1999; the company shot for 68 days starting in mid-April 1999, then wrapped before August 8, which was the end of their blue screen work. Post-production took another six months, giving VIVA ROCK VEGAS quite an impressive schedule. Brian Wilson and Tony Asher, collaborators on the legendary PET SOUNDS album, have contributed a song, and Ann-Margret (Margret) herself has recorded a new version of VIVA ROCK VEGAS for the soundtrack. Movie buffs will remember that aside from appearing in the original FLINTSTONES cartoon (she proudly displays an animation cel of herself in her home to mark the occasion), the versatile redhead also co-starred with Elvis Presley in VIVA LAS VEGAS back in the 1960s. The cinematic proceedings wrap-up with a grand finale, which includes a performance by Mick Jagged and the Stones, with everyone (including William Hanna and Joseph Barbera in animal skins) singing the FLINTSTONE theme song.

Levant admits to facing certain anxieties about bringing the Flintstones back, particularly with a new cast. But he decided to take those feelings in stride. “As with any sequel,” he said, “the audience could say, ‘Eh.’ I’m a huge FLINTSTONES fan. I wanted to see more of it, and I’m betting there are a lot of people out there who do as well. Like I say, I think the fact that it’s a new experience and we’re not just going back to Bedrock to see the same people is a plus. We’ll see more of the world; it’s colorful and exciting. There’s music and dynamite special effects, sensational puppetry. We just couldn’t be happier with it.” □

FLINTSTONES

VIVA EFX

Henson's Creature Shop and Rhythm & Hues.

*By Frederick
C. Szebin*

If there was one particular element that enabled director Brian Levant to follow up his 1994 live action FLINTSTONES feature, it was that Rhythm and Hues—with input from the director—figured out how to bring the Great Gazoo to life. Levant did not want to lose Gazoo from the film, but if a financially viable way to create him for the big screen hadn't been arrived at, THE FLINTSTONES IN VIVA ROCK VEGAS might have gone through yet another rewrite, or into oblivion. But with his love of the material and the genius of Rhythm and Hues' visual effects director Doug Smith and his crew, Gazoo and a few other prehistoric wonders will make it to the screen this April 28th.

Chameleon British actor Alan Cumming (EYES WIDE SHUT, GOLDENEYE) plays the green-skinned magical alien, big of head and of heart, trying to make life a little better for Fred and Barney, but sometimes complicating it beyond comprehension. Gazoo is a favorite of Levant's, and he was determined to get the floating shortstuff on the screen. He just didn't know how complicated that would be.

“The first part of bringing Gazoo to life was the make up,” said Levant. “Alan wears a large frontal lobe piece that goes up to the hairline because it all disappears under the helmet, but we still wanted to get the idea that the brain was really big under there. Then he's wearing cheek pieces, a very long pointed nose of course, and then a piece that goes from his eyelid up over his eyebrow, to give

him almost a Mickey Mouse-shaped eye. It's very whimsical, and at the same time alien.”

Then with costume designer Robert Turturice, a special outfit was designed totally out of human proportion to reflect how it would look once the actor's proportions were shrunk in the computer to resemble Gazoo's tiny torso, hands, thin arms and legs, and enormous head and feet. “The boots, for instance,” said Levant, “were bigger than clown shoes; they're like 28, 29 inches long, big and heavy. They're foam, but still hard to move around in. Then we used x200, a foam material that can be kind of welded, to provide the outer skin and shape over polyurethane, and then the collar and cape, which had to be frozen because you can't always be rotoing it out on bluescreen, so we gave him a little cape, which is a little shorter than in the cartoon, which never moved, so ours doesn't either.”

Cumming, who was working on Broadway at the time, was flown out to California for costume fittings and to record the songs he performs as Mick Jagged, as well as to record all his dialogue as Gazoo so that the onset actors would have at least a semblance of a co-star to react to on the set. After main shooting wrapped, Cumming was then brought onto a blue screen style for three arduous weeks of 12 to 14 hour days to be hung on a flying rig in full make up and costume and perform as Gazoo.

“It's amazing how it was pulled off,” says co-producer Bart Brown. “If you know anything about flying rigs, they really start to wear on your legs and crotch and everything else,



Jane Krakowski as Betty O'Shale (l) and Kristen Johnston as Wilma Slaghoople enjoy a Rock Vegas massage courtesy of Henson's cartoon-like puppetry.

and this guy is hanging there, trying to do performances to nothing other than playback, but he nailed it. He was just outstanding, even during the last few days when he had a cold, wearing full prosthetic with this long, exaggerated nose, trying to blow it in between takes! He certainly was up for the challenge."

In order for Cumming, a regularly proportioned human, to play the tiny Gazooovian, he had to in a sense be electronically drawn and quartered, noted Brown; "They take him and do split lines; they cut him off at the arms, legs, cut him off at the neck, and then they repropportion those body parts and put them back together again, in layman's terms. It's quite a process. Rhythm and Hues and Cinesite did Gazoo because there were so many Gazoo shots that we felt it necessary to divvy them up in order to make our schedule and not overload any one house. Rhythm and Hues had originated the process and were really the main Gazoo experts."

Rhythm and Hues had to deal with the massive Bronto-bridge, the Bronto-coaster and the hundreds of Gazooovians that comprise the opening shot of the film. These beings were the CGI creations Levant didn't want his main alien to be, directed by top animation director Bill Croyer. The hundreds of floating and working Gazoos in the mothership were put through multiple animation cycles so they could work at

their keyboards. One of them even gives the CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND hand movements, one of the little in-jokes peppered throughout the film.

Another one of the bits of eye candy is the CG Bronto-bridge, which Fred and Barney cross at the film's beginning, which was sectioned together with locations filmed over the Navajo Bridge in Arizona, with driving done in Palmdale, California, and cliff face restructuring done in Rhythm and Hues' computers to make the Navajo Bridge location look like it could house a 600 foot dinosaur, with the Flintstonian cars being composited into the entire image later to make the bronto look like it was a two-lane bridge.

Other money shots include the Bronto-coaster, which is actually three bronto-beasts linked together with a sort of rock-carved roller coaster car riding along their backs; there is Chip

Rockefeller's (Thomas Gibson) personal jet, a pterodactyl with a hollowed-out log as a passenger compartment, and then there is baby Dino, part Henson puppet, part CG puppy for long shots. Some effects shots, like actor's performances can wind up on the cutting room floor, and this happened to Dino as well; the cartoon thespian lost a comedy death scene, as well as a funny bit in which he eats the contents of a meat wagon and jumps out of the vehicle as an overstuffed, out-sized pup with a full belly.

Levant wanted to do an entire polo game with the human participants riding Hopperoos, but this wasn't financially feasible. What's left of the abandoned concept is Thomas Gibson as Chip Rockefeller riding into the shot astride the beast, and dismounting. To make it look like Gibson was moving as though astride such a creature a special saddle was created similar to the mechanical bull made

famous by URBAN COWBOY that moved so Gibson seemed to be flowing with the hoppy's movements, much like a cowboy bucking on a trotting horse. To make sure this worked out, Rhythm and Hues pre-animated the hopperoo and its rider so that everyone involved could agree upon how the motions should look. The Bronto-coaster was shot similarly, with motion control from specially-built motion bases.

Levant is happy with all the disparate results that make up VIVA ROCK VEGAS' visual whole. He's the perfect choice to make a movie like this; as a FLINTSTONE fan, he has what is probably the world's single largest collection of FLINTSTONE memorabilia, and genuinely loves this stuff.

"I'm kind of silly that way," he laughed. "I like what I like, and when you like something you don't just say sayonara. I just think this tests so many skills, just to be part of the design and the wardrobe, and the 24,000 props, the set dressing, the costumes that we make here. It's like nothing else. It's so much different than even a sci-fi movie where you design uniforms, furniture and everything. Everything on this film has to be translated, and what you can do with those shapes and that material is just so much fun. When you look at it when you walk onto a set for the first time, and see it all together is a wonderful feeling. I think we've been so successful in creating a world where it all seems real." □

Filming Fred and Wilma on cartoon sets that recreate the look of the animated '60s TV show, part of director Brian Levant's design and effects tour de force.



BABYLON 5

The story behind J. Michael Straczynski's epic five year SF novel for television.

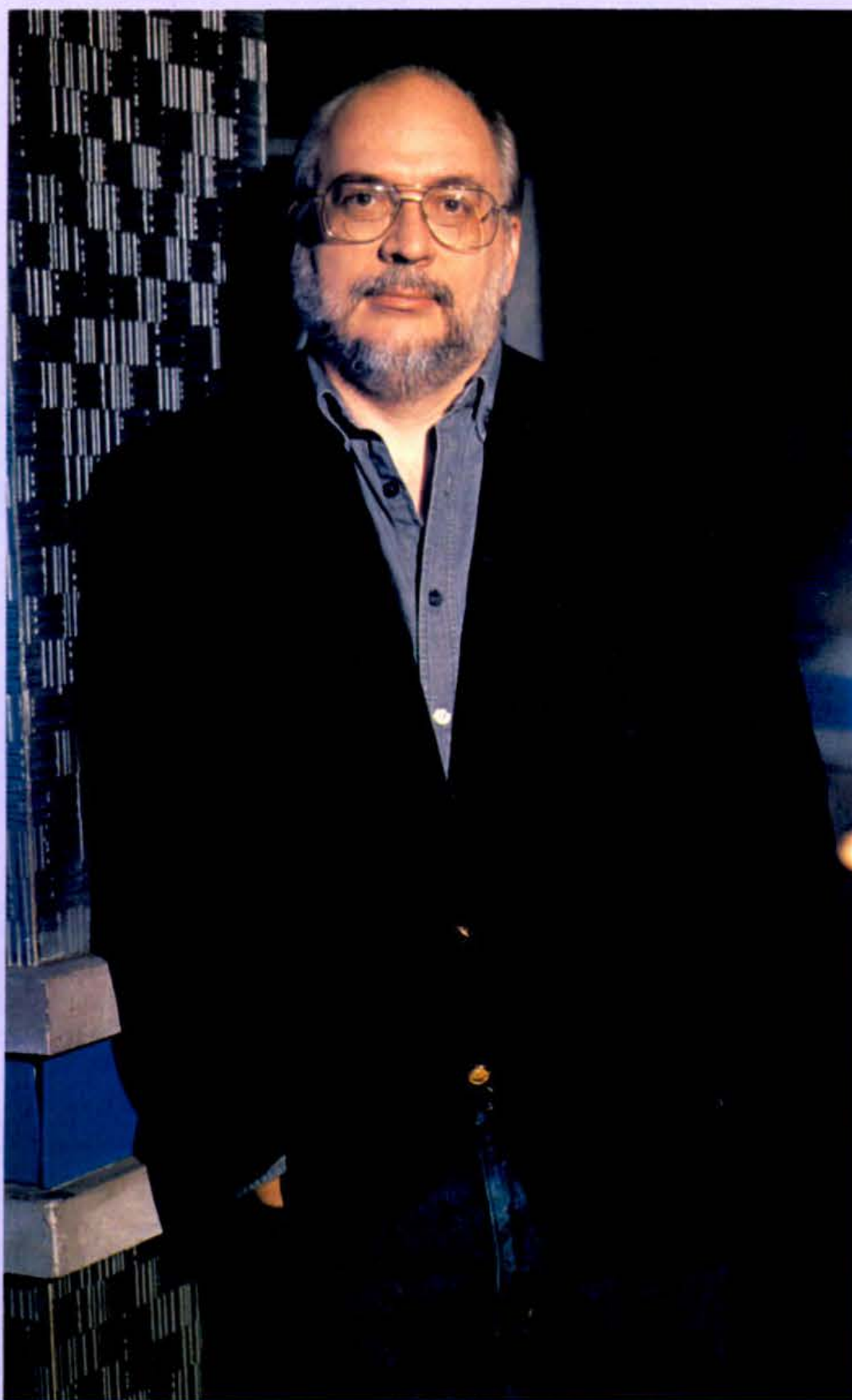
By Frank Garcia & Robert T. Garcia

According to legend, the birth of BABYLON 5 was in 1986. Joseph Michael Straczynski, a veteran playwright, novelist, radio broadcaster, journalist and Hollywood writer/producer had just stepped into the shower at his home when a major jolt altered the course of his life for the next 13 years. Standing under the water stream of his bathtub, Straczynski had a major epiphany for a groundbreaking television project.

He had ideas for a science fiction series platform, taking place on a space station in the far future, on the scale of Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* series, or E.E. "Doc" Smith's *Lensmen* books. The mind blast sent him, still dripping wet from his shower, running straight to his word processor.

From the barest sketch of an idea, Straczynski constructed a full-blown, five year SF epic, broken down by five seasonal chapters, each containing 22 segments and totalling 110 episodes. He called it THE BABYLON PROJECT. Television history had never seen anything like it.

"When I grew up, I fell in love with sagas," said Straczynski. "E.E. 'Doc' Smith, *Lord of the Rings*, *Childhood's End*, the mini-sagas like THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES stories, which are disconnected but tell



Straczynski on the set, writing and producing 110 episodes and five TV movies, currently airing as re-runs on TNT, SF's high watermark on television.

a larger whole if you look at it. And I wondered, 'Why has no one ever done this for American television?' The British have done some of this, THE PRISONER, BLAKE'S 7. And that was the first question. 'Is it possible, can it be done?'"

Straczynski teamed up with co-producers John Copeland and Douglas Netter, with whom he had worked on his earlier kid series CAPTAIN POWER AND THE SOLDIERS OF THE FUTURE. There were no committees in making BABYLON 5. Because there were only three producers, noted director David Eagle, "If there was any question about anything, they were right there down the hall. The production offices were attached to the set. That made it easy and it took very little time to answer questions and solve problems. Everything was pretty self-contained and it was a well-oiled machine.

"Also, what made the show unique was Joe was God. What he wrote was the way it was. It wasn't a committee of other producers he had to submit his script to and go through six different changes. There wasn't a network that had their input. He was pretty much free to do what he wanted. If anything got changed, it was because he wanted to change it. Sometimes I got him to make changes when I was able to convince him it needed to be changed and when he felt it made sense. Other



The Shadows attack the White Star in third season's premiere "Matters of Honor," CGI effects created by Foundation Imaging. Straczynski was the first U.S. producer to follow the British SF serial TV tradition.

BABYLON 5 EPISODE GUIDE

By Frank Garcia

SEASON ONE "Signs and Portents"

"Would you prefer to be conscious or unconscious during the mating? I would prefer conscious, but I don't know what your...pleasure threshold is."

—G'Kar to Lyta Alexander

THE GATHERING ★★ (ORIGINAL) ★★★ (S.E.)

Original: 2/22/1993 and the Special Edition: 1/4/1998. Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Richard Compton.

When the Vorlon Empire's ambassador, Kosh, becomes the victim of an attempted assassination during his arrival aboard Babylon 5, Commander Jeffrey Sinclair (Michael O'Hare) is accused of being the assassin. Lyta Alexander (Patricia Tallman), a Psi Corps telepath, made the discovery during her psychic probe of the injured Kosh. Charged with the crime, Sinclair appears before the advisory council chaired by Lt. Commander Laurel Takashima (Tamlyn Tomita) and representatives of the other alien races. To clear his name, Sinclair orders Station Chief Michael Garibaldi (Jerry Doyle) to find the truth.



The Minbari assassin and saboteur kills himself after telling Sinclair that the Commander has a "hole in his mind," in "The Gathering."

In this, our introduction to the B5 universe, the station looked and sounded brighter, funkier than the series. In retrospect, the character ensemble is quite different, indicative as much of the state of evolution in the universe as it was behind the scenes in the making of the show. It would have been a very different series had this cast been retained intact.

When it premiered in 1993, Foundation Imaging's Emmy-winning computer generated special effects made this film stand out from any other SF film, giving it an exciting, unique and fresh presentation. Naturally, the quality and sophistication of the SFX have grown considerably since, but without their work, quite likely the series would never have materialized nor would it have been financially feasible.

The Special Edition surpasses the original's edit and music score by far, with the inclusion of more character scenes and less exposition.

For actress Patricia Tallman, when she first looked at "The Gathering" script, she was impressed. "I knew I had in my hands something extraordinary," she said. "It took science fiction seriously. It wasn't cutesy."

According to Joe Straczynski, the film's



Delenn and Garibaldi (Jerry Doyle) enjoy Daffy Duck in Duck Dodgers at the close of "Midnight On the Firing Line," as the series begins airing.

author and series creator, "I had reservations about the pilot," he said. "Something felt wrong to me. Ultimately, it's my responsibility. I was then new to executive producing a series and when the director did his cut it was not as good as it should have been. I didn't know enough to go in and say, 'I'm going to re-edit this.' I more or less deferred to the director's judgment and he had taken many scenes and made them long and ponderous. The action stuff was twice as long as it should have been, and the character moments and the humor and a lot of good stuff ended up on the cutting room floor." To rectify his reservations, Straczynski and producer John Copeland managed to commission a "Special Edition" of the film for TNT as part of the series' premiere on their network.

"On the issue of galactic peace I am long past innocence and fast approaching apathy. It's all a game, a paper fantasy of names and borders. Only one thing matters: blood calls out for blood."

—Londo

MIDNIGHT ON THE FIRING LINE ★★★

1/26/1994. #103 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Richard Compton.

A year after "The Gathering," new EarthForce personnel arrive on Babylon 5. Commander Susan Ivanova is second in command and Talia Winters is the station's Resident Telepath. When the Narns attack a Centauri agricultural colony where Londo's nephew, Carn Mollari (Peter Trencher) is stationed, he and G'Kar come to blows and Londo tells Sinclair about his prophetic dream that he will die by G'Kar's hand. The council discusses sanctions against the Narn but an Earth senator (Paul Hampton) tells Sinclair that Earth will stay neutral. Garibaldi introduces Delenn to Duck Dodgers and popcorn.

For an indication how quickly visual special effects had advanced in the year between "The

Londo falls hard for Centauri slave girl Adira Tyree (Fabiana Udenio), holding up negotiations with the Narn, in "Born To the Purple."



Gathering" and this second installment of the series, Foundation Imaging visual effects designer Ron Thornton and computer animator Adam "Mojo" Lebowitz described the requirements of this episode's complex space battle. "The asteroid belt sequence in EMPIRE STRIKES BACK was a major sequence, finely thought out," said Lebowitz. "Purposely, in 'Midnight on the Firing Line,' the fighters go off into this asteroid belt for two or three shots, just to spice it up a little. It was no big deal, it took us a couple days.

Trivia: The ISN photograph of President Santiago and Marie Craine is series executive producer Doug Netter and costume designer Anne Bruce.

"The soul ends with death unless we act to preserve it."

—Soul Hunter to Delenn

SOUL HUNTER ★★ 1/2

2/2/1994. #102 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Jim Johnston.

A ship comes through the jump gate on a collision course with the station. Sinclair is able to stop it but the injured pilot is a Soul Hunter (W. Morgan Sheppard), a being who captures and preserves the souls of the recent dead. He tells Sinclair that Delenn is Satai and later Sinclair



"Soul Hunter" W. Morgan Sheppard meets with N'Grath, the ill-fated ruler of Downbelow, on his mad quest to capture the soul of Delenn.

finds out it means she is on the Grey Council. A second Soul Hunter (John Snyder) arrives in hot pursuit of his brother who is mad. The rogue Soul Hunter decides to kill Delenn slowly and take her soul with his machine.

Larry DiTillio said that he conceived the idea behind this episode. "Do we have a soul or don't we? According to the Soul Hunters, we do and they steal it away from you. It certainly called for a follow-up. It's an idea I certainly wanted to know more about. I thought 'Soul Hunter' was a fascinating piece of work. Morgan Sheppard did a hell of a job."

"BABYLON 5 traffics in ambiguity," said Joe Straczynski. "Was the Soul Hunter simply taking memories? Was he copying over the neuro pathways and creating an imprint of that? Is that the soul? We don't answer that question and it was the first time we threw out the notion that the show would not deal in all that you're used to seeing. We love to walk them straight into areas where there aren't easy answers. I wanted you to discuss what is the soul."

"What do you want, you moon-faced assassin of joy?"

—Londo to Vir

BORN TO THE PURPLE ★★ 1/2

2/9/1994. #104 Written by Larry DiTillio. Directed by Bruce Seth Green.

Londo is holding up negotiations with G'Kar

times, he would not change things. The buck began and stopped with Joe. That is a more efficient way of doing things.

"There's no standards and practices people and I think that's part of the problem they had with [spin-off] CRUSADE. All of a sudden they had a deal with a network who was meddling and wanted things done differently."

When CAPTAIN POWER was cancelled, Straczynski and buddy Larry DiTillio went shopping around with other series ideas. DiTillio remembered the first time he saw the B5 stuff: "We had done one series idea together, THE DAWN PROJECT, which we tried to shop around, but we didn't get any bites on it," said DiTillio. "Joe was fleshing out B5 because he was trying to do it at the same time."

By the Spring of 1987, after a year of working on it, Straczynski had a full series treatment and a writer's bible. Artist

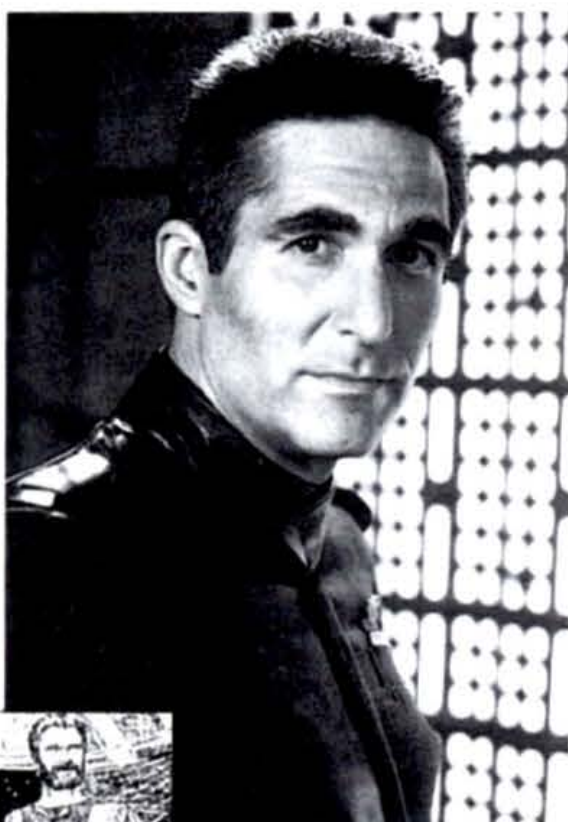
Peter Ledger was hired to design a BABYLON 5 logo, and to do a series of paintings based on the treatment and bible, which were then used for various presentations. Of course, George Lucas successfully marketed STAR WARS to 20th Century-Fox with this technique by hiring Ralph McQuarrie to produce a series of art paintings to help visualize his concept.

At the time, most of the final elements were there. The space station. The League of Non-aligned Worlds. The ambassadors. The brochure described the Vorlons as "a group not to be trusted. A massive power struggle is going on among their upper echelons where advancement is only accomplished by assassination. They seek to eliminate the Earth Alliance and solidify themselves as heads of the Empire." This was, apparently, a discarded concept of the Vorlons.

"It went through several different incarnations and became different each time," said DeTillio. "There were a couple times [Straczynski] thought it was going to sell, and he told me to drop everything and come and work on BABYLON 5, and it didn't happen. Finally, he made it happen. He

“What made the show unique was that Joe was God. There wasn't a network with input. If anything changed it was because he wanted to change it.”

—Director David Eagle—



Michael O'Hare as B5 Commander Jeffrey Sinclair. Left: Straczynski's original concept, sketch by designer Peter Ledger.

the episodes.

In the summer of 1989, BABYLON 5 was pitched to Paramount. They passed and four years later opted instead to do their own space station series, STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE. By a coincidence that was rare in the industry, both shows actually wound up being launched nearly simultaneously, which angered Straczynski a great deal. By this point he had worked for nearly seven years to create something original for television, only to be upstaged by DS9 which had a very similar concept.

By December, 1989, Chris-Craft hooked up with Warner Bros to start a new syndicated network, forming a Consortium called Prime Time Entertainment Network (PTEN) with TV stations around the country. At this juncture, Straczynski was working as a writer/producer on CBS' MURDER SHE WROTE to pay the bills. In November, 1991, BABYLON 5 was announced as one of three flagship projects.

BABYLON 5 effects supervisor Ron Thornton, saw this as a perfect time to start his own business. In 1990, Thornton and his friend Paul Beigle-Bryant, began discussing the possibility of creating a digital effects

found people who believed in it as strongly as he did and got it on the air."

Among the distributors to whom BABYLON 5 was pitched and rejected, included CBS, HBO, ABC, and others. But finally, in March 1989, the package was pitched to Chris-Craft Television, a consortium of independent stations scattered across the country. CCT pledged support of the series idea, and they attempted to create co-production deals with foreign investors.

CCT was looking for a studio production partner to join them in building a new network. Everyone involved agreed that the best method of launching the series would be to present one or two television movies so that it would be an event, and so that the budget spent for the films could help finance the sets needed for the series. Once the planners of the new network were hooked, they had to find a studio to actually produce

because he's falling hard for Adira Tyree (Fabiana Udenio) a beautiful slave girl. Her master, Trakis (Clive Revill), promises to free her if she steals a top secret Centauri file he can sell to the Narns, but when Adira realizes she can't betray Londo and refuses to turn over the data crystal, her life is in danger. Sinclair gets very devious when Londo asks him to help find her before Trakis does. Sinclair tricks G'Kar into leading them to Trakis and makes Londo accept a compromise in the peace talks in exchange for his help. Someone is using the restricted communication channel illegally. Garibaldi is surprised to find out it's Ivanova contacting her dying father Andrei Ivanov (Robert Phalen) but he keeps her secret.

"'Born To The Purple' was a premise that Joe came up with and handed to me as my first script," recalled story editor Larry DiTillio. "Londo smuggles [the drug] Dust in his diplomatic pouch. I didn't want to do the Dust part of it. I never quite understood the drug and I didn't understand it when Joe finally did the episode on it either."

"Why would anyone want to take a drug that would turn you into a maniac and kill you? There's not too much pleasure in that. Drug addicts are drug addicts because the drugs give them pleasure. I couldn't figure it out."

"What I wanted to do was deal with something else that Joe told me early on and was in the bible, that Londo's greatest tragedy was that he was a man who was always looking for love."

The appeal of the episode, says DiTillio, was watching Londo fall in love "with this woman and be betrayed by her. And this has been happening to him all his life."



David McCallum as Dr. Vance Hendricks and Richard Biggs as Dr. Franklin examine an alien artifact in the Med Lab in "Infection."

"Organic technology is the one trick Earth hasn't been able to crack, the ability to create living ships that thrive in the vacuum of space, to create weapons that produce their own power through internal generation, like a firefly lights up at night."

—Vance Hendricks.

INFECTION

★

2/16/1994. #101 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Richard Compton.

An ISN reporter on the station interviews the station personnel and Sinclair keeps ducking her. Dr. Vance Hendricks (David McCallum), an archeologist friend of Dr. Franklin, smuggles a 1,000 year-old bio-tech device from a dead world past the station's bio-hazard safeties. The device turns Nelson Drake (Marshall Teague) into a bio-mechanical nightmare determined to ethnically cleanse Babylon 5, and Sinclair is forced to reason with it in order to save the station. Hendricks was financed by an Earth corporation, Interplanetary Expeditions (IPX) to find alien technology and Franklin thinks it's morally wrong. An EarthForce Defense team confiscates the device so Earth can study bio-tech.

Producer John Copeland recalled that because this was the first production after the series pilot, excitement and anticipation was high among the cast and crew. "It always takes a while for everyone to settle in and become familiar with making a new show. We had, for the most part, a very young crew and everyone was excited to be embarking on the journey."

"Infection" had its ups and downs. We were going into sets to shoot for the first time and discovering things that worked and didn't work about the way we had laid them out. Production was a little on the slow side as we were lighting many of the sets as we got to them to begin shooting."

Sets construction on 12 sets took nine weeks and on day one of week 10, shooting for "Infection" began. "Just about everything was untried," Copeland said. "Marshall Teague, who played Nelson and the Machine, was wearing a neoprene suit and was overcome briefly by heat."

"Earthers have a phrase: 'Keep your friends close and your enemies closer.' I believe they stole it from us."

—G'Kar to Na'toth

THE PARLIAMENT OF DREAMS ★★★

2/23/1994. #108 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Jim Johnston.

Catherine Sakai (Julia Nickson), an old girlfriend of Sinclair's visits while the station is having a festival featuring religious ceremonies of many different races including Human. When G'Kar's aide, Ko'Dath dies accidentally he fears that her replacement, Na'toth (Julie Caitlin Brown) is really an assassin sent to kill him until she saves him from Tu'Pari (Thomas Kopache), the real killer. We get a deeper glimpse of the alien races through their different approaches to religious belief and ceremony. Sinclair isn't sure which religion to pick from Earth and so he invites a representative from them all.

"All of SF is heightened drama," said Julie Caitlin Brown. "It's very hard when you're dealing with aliens and technology that doesn't exist, and not feel it's more dramatic than everyday life. You're talking about interplanetary conflict and war on a regular basis. It's always a world hanging on a balance. It is more dramatic, more Shakespearean. Joe and the writers of STAR TREK do write like that."



Peter Jurasik as Londo and Stephen Furst as Vir feast at a Centauri religious ceremony during a station festival in "Parliament of Dreams."

"The Psi Corps is dedicated to one thing: control. Control over telepaths, the economy, the courts, over matter, over thought itself."

—Jason Ironheart

MIND WAR ★★★

3/2/1994. #110 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Bruce Seth Green.

A rogue telepath on the run from Psi Corps

facility utilizing the latest advances in desktop computer technologies. It was while working on the 1987 half-hour SF series CAPTAIN POWER, that Thornton first began to experiment with 3-D computer graphics which would pre-visualize special effects shots. He and his partner Beigle-Bryant invested in a whole new technology: Computer Generated Imagery (CGI.)

Thornton was approached by his CAPTAIN POWER colleagues Straczynski, Netter and Copeland in mid-1991 to bid on miniatures for BABYLON 5. Thornton suggested using computers for the effects on BABYLON 5. Thornton and Beigle-Bryant created a one minute video of proposed visual effects for BABYLON 5, which would become instrumental in selling the show to Warner Bros television in July 1992.

Steve Burg, the designer of TERMINATOR 2, THE ABYSS, and other

SF features came on board to design the world of BABYLON 5, including the four alien ambassadors and the one-man Starfury fighter ships. He continued to work on odds and ends on the show, including the design of Kosh's revelatory appearance in second season's "The Fall of Night."

Noted Straczynski's fellow producer Douglas Netter, "Joe came to John [Copeland] and I right after we finished CAPTAIN POWER and said, 'I've got an idea for a science fiction show that can be contained, that we can do for a price, that has the potential to be greater than science fiction shows have been. But it took us six years from that point to get the pilot made.'"

Their biggest obstacle was, Netter recalled, that "the networks had had science fiction pitched to them before, along with the caveat, 'We can do this for a reasonable price.' Of course, that was one of the great lies in Hollywood. And even though John and I had an excellent reputation for bringing shows in under budget and on time, as soon as they heard about big effects, red flags would go up in their minds. They were afraid that any attempt to do a science fiction show on a tight budget might result in

"The network had had sci-fi pitched to them before, along with the caveat, 'We can do this for a reasonable price,' one of the great lies of Hollywood."

—Producer Doug Netter—



Jerry Doyle as Security Chief Michael Garibaldi. Inset: Straczynski's script concept as sketched by designer Peter Ledger.



tounded. "When it was over, they said, 'We've got to see that again!'" Netter recalled. "And then when we said, 'We did it on a desktop computer,' they were flabbergasted." As a result, the producers finally got their production deal for a pilot, which was filmed in just under 30 days at a warehouse in Santa Clarita, California between August and September 1992 under director Richard Compton. [See CFQ 23:5] The BABYLON 5 pilot debuted as a two-hour movie, "The Gathering," in the week of February 22, 1993, to a 10.3 GAA national rating.

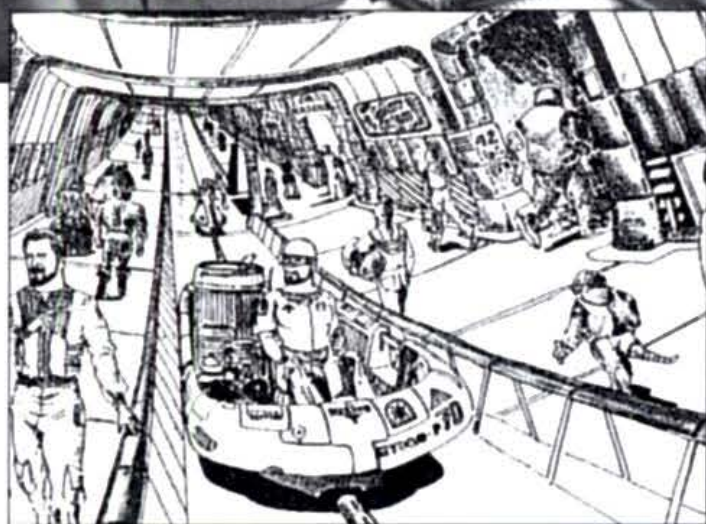
When the series was ordered-up in April, 1993, the producers were faced with the prospect of renting studio space from Warners and they realized they wouldn't have the budget to do the epic they had planned. So they went real estate shopping and carted over all the sets to a warehouse in Sun Valley, California.

Optic Nerve Makeup under John Vulich took over from Criswell Productions for all the prosthetics work and Anne Bruice-Ailing replaced Catherine Adair in the costume department. When series shooting began in July 1993, stages were still under construc-

inferior production values."

And Warner Bros didn't see how a high-quality show could be done on a tight budget. "They said, 'Well, if you are going to do it for that, this stuff will look terrible.' And we said, 'No, it won't,'" Netter remembered. In order to convince them, they brought out the video of Thornton's 50-second sequence featuring a computer-generated spaceship being tracked from far in the distance to its arrival at the space station's docking bay, done all in one continuous shot.

Straczynski likes to recount how, on his pitch to the affiliates, he was terrified. He became sick, he was so nervous that he cracked his tooth just before he entered the room, requiring an ice pack to reduce the swelling. All he had was a story and a short tape of sampled special effects. When Ron Thornton's video was shown to Warner Bros executives and PTEN TV station heads, the buyers were as-



Filming the pilot at the Santa Clarita Production Center on the Main Corridor Set in 1992. Inset: Peter Ledger's original corridor design concept.

tion. Noises came in from outside. Ceilings leaked. Rainstorms happened. Yet the cast and crew became totally wrapped up in building Straczynski's universe.

In making the transition from the pilot to the series, visible changes were made in costumes, set designs, and even in the special effects. "They had corrected what mistakes they made in the pilot," said Larry DiTillio. "They took out the 'Muppet aliens.' There was a great sense of wonder and discovery in those first six months and a great sense of wracked nerves."

In September 1993, the *BABYLON 5* pilot won Ron Thornton his first Emmy for best visual effects. In mid-October, the first fully completed episode was delivered to Warner Bros. By late January 1994, the series premiered. As filming the first season was about to wrap in late March, it became apparent that while the series was gaining popularity, the star needed to be replaced to get new stations signed up. The ensemble cast was comprised of relative unknowns with no one to draw in a wider TV audience. After the season ended, series lead Michael O'Hare got the news, and a casting call went out for a new commander of the *BABYLON 5*. Straczynski used the casting change to re-strategize the story dynamics of the series' five-year plan.

"Sinclair's connections were to the Minbar," said Straczynski. "The Battle of the Line, the missing 24 hours. The problem was I needed someone who had a link to the Shadows which we didn't know he had initially and I thought of putting them on Sin-

clair, [but] because it was one more thing tying to this one guy which stretched credulity, I think, past the breaking point. I said, 'What if I move him off the chessboard and bring in someone who does have a connection to the Shadows, someone who is more willing to get involved in a conspiracy of light, as it were, against his own government and someone who at a time when we are really looking at a major war breaking out is more of a soldier than diplomat.'

As luck would have it, one of television's biggest stars was in the middle of a career change, having dropped his old business manager and looking for something he had never done before. *BABYLON 5* fit the bill. Bruce Boxleitner signed as Captain John Sheridan, and the future of *BABYLON 5* looked healthy again.

It was rocky for a while. Scripts had to be written while the casting call was going on. So the writers wrote them with an ear toward Michael O'Hare's reading patterns, a far cry from Boxleitner's Midwestern rhythms. Lots of rewriting was going on. The other cast members received the news of the replacement two weeks before shooting. And it threw some of them off...but Boxleitner won everyone over quickly. His calm, affable manner kept everyone comfortable.

Boxleitner's hiring assuaged the fears of many of PTEN's worried affiliates. B5 went from a show starring a New York theatre actor and great character actors to a show with a lead whose TV-Q rating was through the roof. The star of *SCARECROW AND MRS. KING* and numerous successful miniseries was someone they could sell to advertisers.

On August 10, 1994 B5's second season began shooting with "Points of Departure." In September, the series won its second Emmy, for makeup design on "Parliament of Dreams." By the end of the season,



Jason Ironheart (William Allen Young), the most powerful of human telepaths, achieves godhood, moving out among the stars in "Mindwar."

and Bester (Walter Koenig) arrives. Jason Ironheart (William Allen Young) was Talia Winter's old lover and teacher. Because of experiments performed upon him by Psi-Corps, he is now one of the most powerful human telepaths in creation. His "growing pains" rocks the station, and Bester and his assistant Kelsey (Felicity Waterman) try to kill him before he reaches full potential. They fail, and god-like, he transcends mortality, his huge glowing image is last seen heading out for the stars, but not before he gives Talia the gift of telekinesis. G'Kar warns Catherine (Julia Nickson) not to survey Sigma 975, a planet in Narn space. As soon as she comes close to the planet, a strange ship kills all power to her own vessel but Narn fighters that G'Kar sent after her rescue her.

"I found them to be a very cordial group of people," said Walter Koenig, recalling his first stint aboard this deep space station. "It was very nice to be treated so well. I think what's happened with a lot of *STAR TREK* actors, it's not exclusive to my situation, when they've appeared on other shows, particularly another SF show—I'm talking about the original cast now—they're greeted with a sense of respect that attests to the fact that they were a part of the original group that made *STAR TREK*. People on *BABYLON 5* were extremely pleasant and very respectful. They made me feel very welcome."

**"We want to marry each other; we love each other."
"Love? What does love have to do with marriage?"**

—Kiran and Londo

THE WAR PRAYER

★★★

3/9/1994, #107 Written by D.C. Fontana. Directed by Richard Compton.

Things are getting ugly on the station.

Kiran (Rodney Eastman), Vir's cousin, and Aria (Danica McKellar), running away from arranged marriages, ask Londo's help in "The War Prayer."



Members of Homeguard, a violent pro-Earth group stage numerous attacks on aliens. Shaal Mayan (Nancy Lee Grahn) a famous Minbari poet and old friend of Delenn's is the latest victim. Ivanova's old lover, Malcolm Biggs (Tristan Rogers) shows up trying to rekindle the romance but when it turns out he's a member of Homeguard, Ivanova and Sinclair pretend to sympathize to learn who the rest of the terrorists are and capture them. Vir asks Londo to help his cousin Kiran (Rodney Eastman) and his love, Aria (Danica McKellar) who are running from arranged marriages. Violence is breaking out all over the station, some aliens beat up a human named Roberts (Michael Paul Chan) and the Homeguard attacks the Centauri lovers.

"I did a rewrite myself mainly to take the Centauri lover story and scale it down a little bit," said Larry DiTillio. "In the first draft, there was just too much of it. It was overshadowing the bigger story, about Homeguard. I quite liked the Centauri story. For one thing, it gives Londo a little twist. He becomes a little nicer guy in the story. That's interesting to me. Dorothy loves those stories. She just got carried away. The way we worked it, it came out well."

"Everyone lies, Michael. The innocent lie because they don't want to be blamed for something they didn't do, and the guilty lie because they don't have any other choice."
—Sinclair to Garibaldi.

AND THE SKY FULL OF STARS ★★★★★

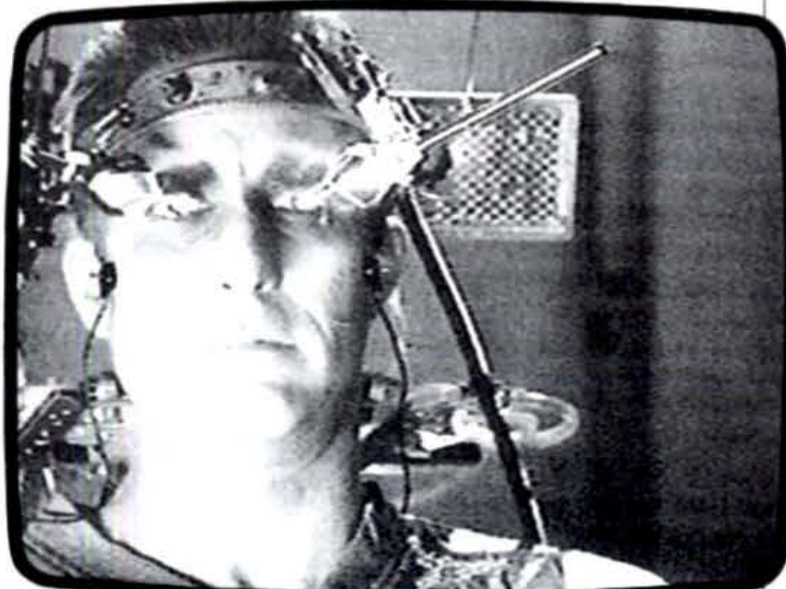
3/16/1994. #106 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Janet Greek.

Knight One (Judson Scott) and Knight Two (Christopher Neame) kidnap Sinclair and use a virtual reality cybernet to try to unlock Sinclair's missing memories during the Earth/Minbari war. Knight One and Sinclair are locked inside a simulation that keeps repeating Sinclair's experience on the Battle of the Line. Sinclair begins to remember. He was taken inside the Minbari warship he tried to ram and was tortured and interrogated by hooded gray figures. In the visions, Sinclair sees Delenn's face. It's such a shock that he breaks out of his restraints and attacks the two Knights.

"We were very fortunate to get Janet Greek," said Larry DiTillio. "She was a science fiction fan and because she was a woman, the industry wouldn't let her work on science fiction shows. I consider 'Sky Full of Stars' as the breakout show of the first season. My big regret was not being able to work with Janet. She did like my stuff. We had a pretty good relationship. We palled around a lot. She's just a super director, because her visual eye is so gorgeous. When you went to see her dailies—which are a bore to look at half the time—in just the framing of the shots and stuff like that, Janet's were really terrific."

"She subsequently did most of the big arc

Sinclair (Michael O'Hare) is kidnapped and strapped into a virtual reality machine to unlock his missing memories of the Earth/Minbari war.



Bruce Boxleitner managed to settle down and be comfortable in his role. But there was an unexpected casualty in the ranks: actress Andrea Thompson didn't feel she was doing enough and asked to be let out of her contract. She would become just the second of several departures. To compensate, Straczynski wrote "Divided Loyalties," to write her out and reintroduce B5's original telepath, Lyta Alexander as played by Patricia Tallman.

The series success had enabled Warner Bros to syndicate the show in over 15 other countries, including England, France, Germany, Singapore, Thailand, Australia (where fan support brought it back on the air after it was cancelled), Israel, Malaysia, Japan and parts of South America.

"We were on in Greece for a while," said Straczynski, "but the station that was airing it went bankrupt. It actually shut down in the middle of one of our

episodes. I'm told that there were picket lines the next morning demanding that they show the second half."

Bruce Boxleitner remarked, "In my opinion, science fiction is not mainstream. I think some people just look at these rubber heads and go 'What is that? Honey can you put SEINFELD back on?' ER is always going to be more popular than BABYLON 5."

The show, however, grew into quite a hit in several markets overseas, like Germany and England, but in the United States it ranked behind STAR TREK: VOYAGER and HERCULES: THE LEGENDARY JOURNEYS. Its long, epic storyline is one that at least the English could appreciate with similar shows like BLAKE'S 7 or THE PRISONER.

Harlan Ellison has called it, "GONE WITH THE WIND in space."

It's a description that Straczynski finds quite appropriate: "You could say that GONE WITH THE WIND [like BABYLON 5] is a very plot-driven story, because it was driven by the Civil War. Events happen which move very quickly and are very intense. The story can't happen without that context, but it's about the characters in the

“Governments will rise. Governments will fall. That's in the background. In the foreground we see how it affects a small group of people at the center.”

—Writer, Joe Straczynski—



Andreas Katsulas as Narn Ambassador G'Kar. Inset: Straczynski's original character concept sketched by designer Peter Ledger.

sively depressed. I tried to write but I couldn't. I actually got hives. I hadn't had hives since I had gone to high school. It was just such a foreign concept to me that it wouldn't get done that my whole brain imploded. The next day they said, 'We worked it out.' The problem was an impasse between Warner Bros and the PTEN stations over single-vs. double-runs, caused by the influx of other available new programming."

In July, B5 was nominated for three Emmys in the categories of Cinematography and Hairstyling for "Geometry of Shadows" and Makeup for "Acts of Sacrifice."

With the third season pickup, Straczynski promised to wreak all sort of havoc in the BABYLON 5 universe. Extending the GONE WITH THE WIND metaphor, it was time to burn Atlanta.

Straczynski was referring to one of the series' most pivotal events, "Severed Dreams," where Sheridan fought against his own government and declared the station as an independent colony until President Clark was removed from office. At the end of the third season, renewal/cancellation tensions sprang up again because PTEN was dis-

foreground.

"Similarly, BABYLON 5 functions as a microcosm. We have these huge dark and inimical forces working behind the scenes. Governments will rise. Governments will fall. History's going to change. That's all in the background. In the foreground are your characters, and we see how all that affects a small group of people caught in this crucible at the center of it."

The series' third season was officially greenlighted in June 8, 1995. However, there was a brief time during the summer when it looked like BABYLON 5 did not have a future. Straczynski said it was because of "weird stuff" at Warner Bros' PTEN network. "Nothing to do with us," he said, "but we heard from Warners that we shouldn't hold out any hope for renewal."

Straczynski remembered his shock, "For one day, John Copeland and I were sitting on ice picks. I didn't know what to do. I was mas-

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BRUCE BOXLEITNER

The actor behind Captain John Sheridan on commanding Straczynski's station for four seasons.

By Robert Garcia

Bruce Boxleitner, the "king of the television mini-series," had become bored with the same old thing. Ironically, what he chose to alleviate his boredom was to become the star of the longest mini-series in TV history, *BABYLON 5*.

"I had done all there was to do on television, from series to miniseries to movies of the week, and they were all the same after a while," said Boxleitner. "I think that's what was getting to me. Nothing really tweaked my imagination." When producers John Copeland and Doug Netter (whom he worked for in westerns in the '70s), asked him to come in for *BABYLON 5*. It was a welcome call, but a funny coincidence.

While he had watched the occasional rerun of *B5* and enjoyed its "darker, grittier feel," he never really followed the show. One evening a member of his East Coast fan club heard that Michael O'Hare was leaving the show, and suggested that Boxleitner get his agent on it. "But that's not how it works," he said. "If someone is interested in me, they call me and that's fine." Two weeks later he received a call.

Boxleitner found out that his call-in was part of a long casting process. "They had seen everybody in town," quipped Boxleitner, "Corbin Bernsen, Michael York, everybody." But on his interview he found that there was much to like about the job. "I had been doing a lot of traveling that year with M.O.W.s, and I was really just tired of that. I have family here. I wanted to see my son. So the show answered a lot of things for me. I have a wife and a home that I come

home to at night instead of a hotel room."

Writer Joe Straczynski's plot twists and turns really hooked the star. "That's what made this all so much fun," he said. "I never had this type of fun with any of my other TV shows. When I was doing westerns I enjoyed them, because I was out riding horses and learning all those skills. This one had its own rewards."

Personally and professionally, *BABYLON 5* was exactly what Boxleitner was looking for and he agreed to sign on. However it was only a week or so before the

show started actually filming, and for a short time chaos ensued. On the first episode, Straczynski was on the sound stage, altering completed scripts to match dialogue to Boxleitner's speech patterns. The cast and crew had to adjust to him being the new leading man, and Boxleitner, himself, had to play catch-up. "I really had to immerse myself into Straczynski's world," he said. "Everybody else had the advantage of being on for a season, comfortable in their clothes. I hit the ground running."

The star soon got into the swing of things. His affable manner and sheer professionalism quickly won over the cast and crew. At first glance, Bruce Boxleitner, with his homespun good looks and sunny disposition seems an odd choice to play the commander of *Babylon 5*. After all, *B5* is a hotbed of brooding, tragically flawed characters, but Boxleitner's Captain John Sheridan proved to be just what the darker-than-*TREK* series needed to reach a wider audience.

When asked about why he thinks his character is more popular than the previous com-

mander Sinclair, Boxleitner said, "I think Sheridan's a sunnier character. Maybe that's just something I bring to it. With Sinclair, there was something missing. He had this darkness to him."

"Sheridan is what Joe wanted as a hero. A guy who has to keep going and puts the best face on things. He has his downside. He's temperamental and sometimes a little impulsive, but he really believes in the future. Like the speech I gave in 'And Now For A Word.' He still believes that we have to carry on for future generations, and build



Boxleitner as Sheridan, replacing Michael O'Hare's Sinclair second season. The king of TV minis signed on for four years of the longest mini-series ever.



Boxleitner as a bearded Sheridan 5th season, wed to Minbari Ambassador Delenn (Mira Furlan) and elected President of the Interstellar Alliance.

a life for them. He's kind of an old-fashioned, gung-ho, let's-go-for-it guy, and maybe you need that in the saga."

But Boxleitner doesn't see Sheridan as all sunshine and light. He definitely views him as part of the gritty B5 crew. "I think all the Earthers on Babylon 5 are lonely individuals. It's kind of a foreign legion outpost. The people there are misfits. They're very dysfunctional, lonely characters all seeking something, which holds a continual fascination for me as an actor. Ivonova and Sheridan share very much this same kind of thing. They weren't successful at their private lives with relationships. They always ended in disappointment or tragedy.

"Sheridan tries to put the best face on it, which is really what you have to do as a commander. You can't walk around hang-doggin' everything. You're leading people. If you do that then they're going to go the same way, so he does put that best face on it. Granted that isn't necessarily the real face."

Finding Sheridan's real face was the interesting challenge for Boxleitner. Some of the se-

cret was understanding where Sheridan came from. "He was a completely dedicated soldier and that was his life," said Boxleitner. "He didn't look beyond that. He didn't have deep religious feelings. He was basically Honor, Duty, Earth. He was just another starship captain who worked his way up the ranks, and during the Earth-Minbari War he achieved some valor.

He was just a young soldier who had the idea to mine an asteroid field. It was probably one of the only major victories they had. Wars are basically won by many tragic mistakes and accidents."

Straczynski gave Boxleitner the idea of how to approach Sheridan in this situation "Joe is a big World War II buff and he wanted me to think of certain historical figures who were our great leaders during World War II, especially Eisenhower," said Boxleitner. "Given the title of supreme commander, he had to try and keep the various allies together who were bickering amongst themselves. Which certainly fits into our saga, when you look at the various alien races. We have to keep them together in some kind of order to fight against the common enemy."

Sheridan's move to center stage and very much into the central conflict of the series was the crux of B5's third season. "His whole world, everything he knew was turned upside down and wasn't valid anymore. Events thrust him into the forefront. In the end, he had to be the guy to kick-start and get this bigger war going. He was the one who moved into action."

His enthusiasm for the story has inspired the best work of Boxleitner's career. His portrayal of Sheridan as a man conquering his fears and gathering his courage against impossible odds, added a dynamic quality to the show, especially in the third season's pivotal episodes, "Confessions and

"The people there are misfits. They're very dysfunctional, lonely characters all seeking something, which holds a continual fascination for me as an actor."

—Bruce Boxleitner—

Lamentations" and "Z'ha'dum." Those are the shows where Sheridan has to face down the Vorlon Kosh and the Shadow leaders on Z'ha'dum, knowing that at any moment he could be killed without a second thought by these powerful aliens, exactly the position Earth is in, in this war.

How to tell that story was the key to the series. BABYLON 5 is a

drama that needs to discuss much more than a single person's life story. "Joe kept referring to the heroic epic from Arthur to Ulysses," said Boxleitner. "In all these stories, you have to follow this main hero through the saga, seeing things through his eyes, through his experiences. These classic heroic myths and books like *The Lord of The Rings* are all influences for Joe.

"But I think of the Arthurian character. Sheridan has founded this grand alliance, a Camelot, an ideal. That's what he's striving for. Arthur brought all the tribes of Britons together and then lost it. That was the heroic tragedy, that it crumbled. Then they fought to rebuild it again. That seems to be in every myth."

With these influences driving his character it's no surprise that Boxleitner enjoyed the arc-driven episodes the best. "I liked the big stories, the ones that kick everything forward a little more. 'Severed Dreams' for example, was definitely one we sank a lot of time and money into and I was very pleased with the outcome.

"Much of the storyline was cut out, just because of time—that's the thing sometimes I think suffered on the show. We had so many storylines going and so many things being addressed, that sometimes editorially they had to be snipped. But, we couldn't do the big ones every week; we needed the quieter shows. Joe did that intentionally too. He wrote the little ones, character-driven ones, and then—BA-BOOM! It gave us more variety."

The show's format, using an ensemble cast is something Boxleitner enjoyed very much. "When Joe writes his characters, I think he flips them upside down every once in a while to see what comes down, falls out of the pocket. Even G'Kar was a much darker character in the beginning and he's emerged as this heroic Narn.

"Look at Andreas Katsulas. He played a larger-than-life character. What are his boundaries as G'Kar? They're limitless. What does a Narn do? Well, whatever he wants to do. Unless Joe thinks it's very

Alien encounter on the Zocalo, a religious fanatic asks Sheridan for his blessing in fourth season's "Racing Mars," now a post-resurrection cult figure.





Boxleitner's Sheridan strides onto the station, replacing Michael O'Hare's Commander Sinclair second season, playing dangerous political games with Andreas Katsulas as G'Kar, Furlan and Peter Jurasik as Londo.

strange. You can't get two more theatrical characters than Londo and G'kar. They're wonderful. They're my favorites. My wife is totally in love with G'Kar. She couldn't give a shit about Sheridan."

In spite of his wife's interest in the heroic Narn, Boxleitner was never tempted to trade places with Katsulas or any of those who portray aliens. "Do you know how many hours Andreas was in makeup? Two and a half! Mira was about three hours and Bill Mumy about the same. When I had a 6:30 call, they'd been in since 4:30 in the morning. And they didn't get out until 6:30 at night. Nobody wants to live that way."

Boxleitner seemed downright enthusiastic about the out of the way Babylonian studio. "It was an actual warehouse, not a sound stage. We had constant airplanes because we're right near Burbank airport. We're right under their flight patterns sometimes. That interrupted many of our takes and we had to stop and do it over again. Or try to desperately squeeze it all in before the next flight."

"Then we're in an industrial area with a large gravel pit next to us. We had a freeway off-ramp with these big semi trucks barreling down the thing, lowering their gears. [Gear shifting noises]. That goes through the soundtrack. In the winter, it's cold and damp with giant puddles everywhere. In summer, we sweat and get occasional air-conditioning, but only in certain

spots. It was wonderful, just like the old sound stages."

The show is full of bluescreen work and imagined special effects which gave a certain freedom to Boxleitner. "Doing BABYLON 5 is much more a theatrical experience. In stage plays, you oftentimes are conjuring images which aren't there and working with much more of an imagination involved. And BABYLON 5 is very much like that."

It's not the first time Boxleitner worked on a science fiction project with this same appeal for him. One of his favorite jobs was Disney's '70s precursor to the digital revolution, TRON. "I'm particularly proud of having been in TRON. I think it's appreciated more now, than it was at the time. Maybe that kind of dogs me. I'm never appreciated at the time. [He laughed.] TRON was fun. While we were making it, I thought, 'What is this nonsense.' I was doing westerns at the time, and it had no reality at all to me. In fact I turned it down. Then they came back and told me that Jeff Bridges was starring in it. I said, 'Wow I love him,' and that was my whole incentive for doing TRON."

Boxleitner, 46, noted that he and Katsulas and Jurasik were considered "oldsters" among the B5 cast and crew. "The crew were all real young. They'd say to me: 'You were Tron? Oh maaan!' And they saw it when they were six—on video." □

stories we had. The wrapup stories. And never did a bad job."

And so just who were those guys, Knight One and Two? Noted Joe Straczynski, "Larry wanted to write a story about this group called Bureau 13, and it's a little more of what I wanted to do with [President] Clark, and I said, 'Well, don't make too big a deal out of it because we have to go over in this direction,' but he wanted to tell a story about this one Bureau. They got greater play than it probably should have gotten. There's always been sort of a covert branch where Clark was setting things up for his take-over and having a covert operations area. I didn't want to give it a name initially. But those [Knights in 'Sky Full of Stars'] were sent by Bureau 13." The organization's handiwork doesn't show up again until next seasons' "Spider in the Web."

Trivia: When Walter Koenig was not available to play Knight One, Patrick McGoochan was approached and he loved the role but was unable to do it.

"Justice or immortality, an interesting choice"
—Ivanova

DEATHWALKER ★★ 1/2

4/20/1994, #113 Written by Larry DiTillio. Directed by Bruce Seth Green.

Jha'dur (Sarah Douglas) the last of her race, a former death camp doctor from the Dilgar War known as Deathwalker arrives from Minbar. She reappears after 30 years, because she has found the secret of immortality and is offering it to any race that grants her asylum and immunity. G'Kar's aide, Na'toth, has a blood oath to kill the woman, but is held back. The major powers all want the immortality drug. Ambassador Kalika (Robin Curtis) demands Deathwalker be put on trial as a war criminal. Sinclair gets caught in the middle when Deathwalker chooses Earth, and Senator Hidoshi (Aki Aleong) orders Sinclair to send her there. Kosh has a Vorlon battleship kill her en route to Earth, saying that the younger races are not yet ready for immortality.

"Deathwalker was a premise of Sinclair having to defend [the Nazi Doctor Josef] Mengele, a great war criminal," noted Larry DiTillio. "I had this character who made Hitler look like a piker. She enjoyed experimenting on people. She was a heinous woman. I had to come up with a reason why Sinclair would have to defend her. And I came up with the antiagathic [which comes out of James Blish's *Cities In Space*.]"

"There was stuff we had to cut out. Originally at the end, there's a scene G'Kar is trying to get the antiagathic. He goes to Deathwalker and she horrifies him by asking for Na'toth's head. And he leaves, but he still wants the thing for his government. So he figures he'll unleash Na'toth and he does, because she still has Shonkar [the

Kosh's Vorlon battlecruiser destroys the ship carrying "Deathwalker" to Earth, preventing humans from learning the secret of immortality.



blood oath] against the woman, and she'll go to any lengths by which to kill her. What happened in that show, is that she goes to Deathwalker's quarters intending to kill her and Deathwalker is waiting for her knowing that she is going to come. There is a vicious fight between the two women which Deathwalker wins. As she is about to kill Na'toth, Sinclair comes in and basically clocks her in the face. We simply didn't have enough time for a big fight scene between the two of them. The story got so massive. It was an incredibly draining shooting schedule, because we had so many actors on the set."

Trivia: Comedian Gilbert Gottfried was originally slated to play Abbut but because he was based in New York, it was too expensive to bring him in for a 'B' story.



Alien parents Tharg (Stephen Lee) and M'Ola (Tricia O'Neil) ask Sinclair to stop Dr. Franklin from saving their dying son in "Believers."

"Life has to be more than just a pulse beat. What we hold sacred gives our lives meaning."
—Sinclair

BELIEVERS ★★★

4/27/1994. #105 Written by David Gerrold. Directed by Richard Compton.

Dr. Franklin faces a moral dilemma when alien parents, M'Ola (Tricia O'Neil) and Tharg (Stephen Lee) refuse to let Dr. Franklin perform surgery on their dying son, Shon (Jonathon Kaplan). They believe that if their son's body is punctured his soul will escape and that without his spirit he wouldn't be alive anyway. Sinclair upholds the parents rights and forbids Franklin to operate, but the real issue is that Franklin is as much of a fanatic about his belief in saving physical life at any cost as the parents are. He thinks his belief takes precedence and disobeys a direct order, and operates anyway. The parents are horrified by what he's done and eventually kill the boy.

"The first time I saw the final cut I was a little taken aback because everything was played kind of in a monotone," said David Gerrold. "The performances weren't as intense as I had been imagining. I thought Franklin was a little stale, I was a little taken aback but the more I saw it, I began to notice the subtleties and nuances in what had been going on and I began to appreciate that a lot more. The audience doesn't watch these episodes just once and so you want there to be things for them to discover when they come back to it. I was particularly taken by the performances of the parents. I thought they did the best job in the whole show and the boy was quite talented too. I never saw any of them without their make-up. Just very nice people."

Recalling a scene he wrote that was cut from the episode, David Gerrold said, "There's a moment where the parents are saying 'Goodbye' and the father says, 'When you were born, you were so little! We had the choice of eating you or letting you grow up. Your mother said there wouldn't be enough to go around, so we decided



Happy Days: Jerry Doyle as Security Chief Garibaldi, falling off the wagon in "Survivors" when he is suspected of political sabotage.

to let you grow up.' Joe looked at that and said, 'Why did you put that in?' I said, 'They're an alien species! We really need to show how alien their culture is!' and he said, 'Are you going to break my arm on this one?' I said, 'No, if you want to cut it, you can. I just put that in for the fun of it.' And so he cut it.

"I would say that Joe Straczynski is just about the best producer I've worked with since [STAR TREK'S] Gene L. Coon."

"We are alike, you and I. We are both, as you say, 'the odd man out.'"
—Londo to Garibaldi

SURVIVORS ★★

5/4/1994. #111 Written by Mark Scott Zicree. Directed by Jim Johnston.

The station is in an uproar due to an impending visit by President Santiago. The station gets new fighter wings to beef up security and Lianna Kemmer (Elaine Thomas) the president's personal security officer comes to B5 to make sure security are up to standards. When Cobra Bay 12 explodes, the bomber names Garibaldi with his dying breath. Lianna believes Garibaldi is behind the bombing. To clear his name, Garibaldi goes on the run, has various adventures until finally, he suspects Cutter (Tom Donaldson) one of Lianna's men as being responsible but she refuses to believe him. As the President's ship is about to dock Garibaldi insists they check it again. Cutter shoots Lianna and Garibaldi fights him and tells Ivanova to abort the drop before the President can dock. The President visits, and finally, Garibaldi and Lianna restore their relationship.

"I like Jerry very much," said director Jim Johnston. "I think he's got a good character and he's a good actor. I think he's got a good take on that character and you do believe that that's him and he's got certain vulnerabilities that he shows in this character. I think it was fun for him because we did improvise a lot on that in terms of how he would play that once he had started drinking again, so I think that's a very good show too."

Our first glimpse of the Shadows in battle, blasting the raiders to steal the Eye for Londo to gain the Centauri throne in "Signs and Portents."



"One thing hasn't changed: the worker always gets shafted."
—Dock foreman

"You should never hand someone a gun unless you're sure where they'll point it."
—Sinclair to Zento

BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY ★★★

5/11/1994. #114 Written by Kathryn Drennan. Directed by Jim Johnston.

More trouble in the docking bays, an accident due to faulty equipment kills a worker and sets off an illegal strike. The issue is more money, but not pay raises. Guild representative Neeoma Connally (Katy Boyer) demands they rehab the docking equipment and hire more workers because they are so short-handed. Senator Hidoshi (Aki Aleong) sends in Orin Zento (John Snyder) a hardline labor negotiator to resolve the dispute. Zento threatens to invoke the Rush Act which allows military troops to arrest strikers. Sinclair sees no way to avoid violence until he finds a loophole in the rules and he just reallocates some of the station's military funds to meet their demands.

Director Jim Johnston recalled working with Michael O'Hare, "Michael, nice guy that he is, I think was just overwhelmed by the amount of dialogue that he had every week. I don't think he ever led a series like that, which means that in a 60 page script, the Captain probably has a third of it and it was hard for him to just get out all those things, let alone act. Whereas Bruce [Boxleitner], who has been in many, many series, was much more used to ingesting five or six pages and spitting them out in the next day. So I think it was very tough on Michael. I know he tried very hard and we had a dialogue coach for him to help him remember his lines."



G'Kar leads the Narn on the station in a religious ceremony in "By Any Means Necessary," as docking bay workers threaten a strike action.

One aspect of the series that impressed Johnston was the fact that the station constantly needed maintenance. "We believe that things are always leaking and breaking," he said. "Somebody's always welding, turning a wrench because out there in space it's just like our houses and cars, and it's going to leak oil and boil over. The nice thing about B5 is that I think they realize and play with it. It's one of the things that are going to be with us in the future. It's an imperfect world."

"What do you want?"
—Morden's question to each of the Ambassadors

"They're here!"
—Delenn

SIGNS AND PORTENTS ★★★

5/18/1994. #116 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Janet Greek.

Londo obtains The Eye, a priceless Centauri artifact that Lord Kiro (Gerrit Graham) wants in

solving.

An important production change also occurred that was not immediately visible in the series, but when Foundation Imaging tried to negotiate a better financial deal, this opened the door for Douglas Netter to bring in his own "in-house" digital effects facility, Netter Digital Entertainment Inc. which was actually formed in 1979.

Straczynski got to announce the fourth season renewal in front a crowd of 2,000 British fans at the Wolf 359 convention in Blackpool, England in June, 1996. He read a telegram he had just received and it said, "Joe, we got the pickup!"

Filming of the fourth season began in August 1996. By December, Straczynski began seriously considering about collapsing the five-year story into four seasons. In an interview just prior to the fourth season, Straczynski noted, "I'm always trying to keep one foot, if you will, in the Babylon 5 universe and one foot in the real world. I've been cognizant of the changing syndication marketplace and this year towards the end of the season I split a few things forward slightly to give me a little more there at the back—there are basically three major themes left to play out after the end of year three. Usually I do one major theme, then I give you a break for a while with some personal stories, then I wrap up slowly the next major theme, and then on to the next one. It is altogether possible to take those three themes and collapse them down into one year and plug out some of the filler stuff and do the whole thing in one year. If they say it's four, end of discussion, it then becomes my responsibility to end this story where I want to end it."

Long-time television veteran Boxleitner was constantly irritated by the situation, and in-between seasons he vented his frustration. "I just wish we didn't have to live under this paranoia of 'Will we be back?' I know the people at VOYAGER and DS9 aren't worried. We always have this uphill battle, and we never know if we'll be picked up. It's a five-year saga, but the guys in the suits in those offices, they could give

“BABYLON 5 will be around forever. Joe's done something like Lord of the Rings for TV science fiction. Anything after this will just be a copy.”

—Actress Patricia Tallman—



Peter Jurasik as Centauri Ambassador Londo Mollari. Inset: Straczynski's script concept as sketched by designer Peter Ledger.

son four. Doug Netter never gave up and was really responsible for us winding up on TNT."

In February 1997, Babylonian got the order from TNT for two TV movies: a prequel story titled *IN THE BEGINNING* and *THIRDSPEACE*. When the fourth season finished filming, *THIRDSPEACE* immediately went into production and was followed by *IN THE BEGINNING*.

THIRDSPEACE was a story that took place early in the fourth season, somewhere between "Into the Fire" and "Moments of Transition." Because the prequel took place more than 10 years before Babylon 5, the station sets needed to be used first in *THIRDSPEACE* before reconfiguring the soundstages for fresh, new locations in *IN THE BEGINNING*.

After the films were completed, the long wait for renewal kept everyone anxious. In a reprieve engagement, the entire cast and Joe Straczynski and John Copeland were invited to the biggest Babylon 5 convention bash ever, Wolf 359 in Blackpool, England. The TNT network had acquired not just the reruns of the first four seasons and the movies but also commissioned the fifth sea-

a damn about your five-year saga. It could be a two-year saga or a three-year saga. Somehow, we manage to keep plunging on."

In a genuine concern that the series would not survive to see a fifth season, it was decided that the final episode, "Sleeping in Light," should be filmed fourth season. But fate raised its hand and pushed that story onto the shelves for a year.

According to producer John Copeland, the concern of whether or not the series would have a fifth season was because "at the end of the third year with the launch of the Warner Bros network and United Paramount Network (UPN) the available hours for syndicated programming were rapidly disappearing. However things worked out for that year, but from the fourth to the fifth there were no slots out there and it looked pretty grim. Joe and I pretty much resigned ourselves to the fact that *BABYLON 5* would likely be over after season

order to claim the Centauri throne. Lady Ladirra (Freda Olster) has a premonition of Babylon 5 being destroyed. There is an increase in raider activity which turns out to be a dodge to draw the fighters away from the ship stealing the Eye and kidnapping Kiro. This is the first appearance by Morden (Ed Wasser) who asks all the ambassadors a question, "What do you want?"

Being the first director to work with Ed Wasser as Morden, Janet Greek remarked, "I remember that the very end of that when we were shooting him sitting alone in the room talking to the Shadows—at the time I shot that, we didn't know exactly what the Shadows were going to look like, so I had a really hard time. I had to make something up to tell him to think about, because we didn't know what they would be or if there would be sound or not. We just didn't know yet. Foundation Imaging and Joe were talking and experimenting with a lot of things that might work. We shot that and we all kind of went, 'Well, I guess we'll have to wait until we see it on TV to see what this will really be like.'"

"You cannot run away from your own heart, Susitcka, not even in space." —Rabbi

TKO

★ 1/2

5/25/1994. #119 Written by Larry DiTillio. Directed by John Flinn.

Walker Smith (Greg McKinney), an old friend of Garibaldi's shows up wanting to be the first human to participate in an alien combat sport. All the different aliens agree on one thing: they don't want humans in the game. The Muta-Do (Soon-Teck Oh), who is in charge of the contest, does not allow Smith to participate. Intrigued by Smith's audacity and courage, an alien named Caliban (Don Stroud) approaches Walker and tells him how to make a challenge and enter the games. Smith's victory creates a new respect for humans. Rabbi Koslov (Theodore Bikel) visits Ivanova to help her deal with her father's recent death.

"When I originally pitched 'TKO,' they threw me out of the office," chuckled Larry DiTillio. "'We can't do this whole arena with people screaming and yelling and guys beating each other up,' [the producers said]. I said 'Well, okay. I'll come up with another story.' But, in the interim somehow Jim [Johnston] got a copy of the script, and went crazy. He said, 'I want to do this. I know exactly how to do this.' He went to Doug [Netter] and he pitched it. He said, 'I can do this whole story. I'll show you how we'll do this set. We'll have this cone of light above the thing.' He got Doug so excited, that Doug came back to me and told me to go ahead and do that story. So I sat down to do it, and I was looking for a place to put that Ivanova shiva story, and Joe said, 'Why don't you put it there. It will make a nice counterpoint and you'll have a very violent story and a very

An alien objects to humans joining combat sport in "TKO," telling Walker Smith "You intrude on our worlds and make a mockery of our customs."



gentle story.' I'm not quite sure that worked, but it was an interesting experiment.

"By that time Jim was doing another episode which he was prepping, and he said 'I can do both!' And they said, 'No you can't, because you can't prep and shoot at the same time.' So they gave it to John [Flinn].

"I would have liked to put a little more savagery in it—though it was pretty savage as it was. Theodore Bikel was everything I wanted out of that part, and was a wonderful man to work with."

"What matters is that he strives for the perfection of his soul and the salvation of his race and that he has never wavered or lost faith."
—Delenn

GRAIL

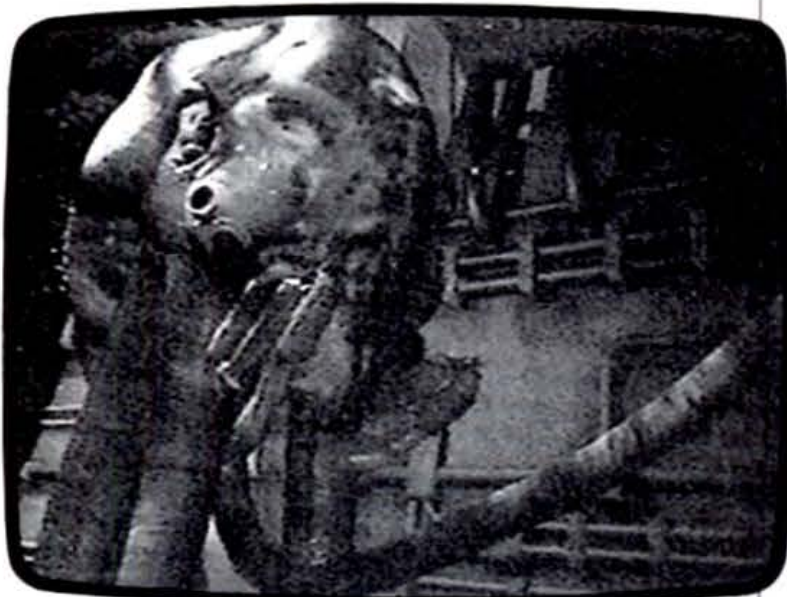
★★

7/6/1994. #109 Written by Christy Marx. Directed by Richard Compton.

Aldous Gajic (David Warner) is a traveler seeking the Holy Grail, but what he finds is something that is killing Lurkers on the station. Evidence points to Kosh but a criminal named Deuce (William Sanderson) is using a Na'Ka'Leen feeder disguised in a Vorlon encounter suit to do the killings. Jinxo (Tom Brookers), a lurker Gajic takes under his wing, got his name because he's worked on the construction of every Babylon station and it was destroyed or disappeared as soon as he left. Gajic convinces him he was just lucky to have escaped four times and has some destiny to fulfill. The feeder won't kill Gajic but when Deuce kills him, Jinxo takes up the Quest.

Arthurian themes permeated in this story by freelancer Christy Marx. Surprisingly, she was given a bare outline to construct her story. "Joe handed out premises," explained Marx. "He had several sentences, simply to the effect of 'this person comes to B5 looking for the Grail.' Joe handed it to me because I'd spent the previous couple of years researching the Grail in order to design and write my Sierra Online and PC computer game, 'Conquests Of Camelot: King Arthur and the Search for the Grail.' So he figured I had to be the expert on the subject."

Marx admitted that she was disappointed by the results of this episode. "They fired the director, then gave him my episode to do as his final hurrah," explained Marx. "He was there physically, but didn't give a shit about what he was doing and it showed."



The Na'ka'leen feeder that's killing Lurkers on the station in "Grail," an early example of Foundation Imaging's groundbreaking CGI creature effects.

"I've always been proud to be a member of Earthforce but right now I'd sooner serve the Minbari. At least they have a sense of honor."

—Ivanova to Garibldi

EYES

★★

7/13/1994. #122 Written by Larry DiTillio. Directed by Jim Johnston.

Earthforce's Internal Affairs, nicknamed

son so that the saga could have its proper conclusion. As the amphitheater was filled with the thundering cheers and applause of 3,500 grateful and loyal viewers, it was a thrilling, triumphant moment for Straczynski and 26 castmembers on stage.

"We broke into the pub and celebrated!" laughed Boxleitner, recalling the moment.

However, backstage, emotional turmoil was building among the actors. They still needed to confront the cold, hard reality of renegotiating their contracts. And not everyone was successful in this task.

In the move from the PTEN network, to direct syndication, and to TNT, B5's very frugal budget was trimmed even more. Pay scales were different and the normal shooting schedule of seven days for each episode was shortened to six days. According to Peter Jurasik, the renegotiation process was even more dire than anyone imagined.

"All the contractual stuff went down when we were in Wolf 359," said Jurasik. "They were threatening to fire Andreas [Katsulas] and me and Bruce [Boxleitner]. We all got our notices if we wouldn't sign that night."

Actress Claudia Christian was unable to arrive at an agreement that would allow her to do both a movie and the fifth season. Straczynski contended that although Christian verbally continued to assure that she wanted to be in the fifth season, she had failed to respond to repeated calls for her to sign on before the contract deadlines expired. It was clear, he said, that she wanted to do movies.

Christian said the actors were asked to give up their residuals for the fifth season. That Straczynski did offer her the time off she requested so that she could go off and do a film, but he could not put that in writing. In the end, deadlines were missed and there was a miscommunication between her and her agent. Warner Bros told her agent that the BABYLON 5 offer was withdrawn. Her assertion was that she was fired.

A year later, in the summer 1998 issue of the now-defunct SF media magazine *Sci-Fi*

"Usually I do one major theme, then I give you a break for a while with personal stories, then I wrap up slowly the next major theme, then on to the next."

—Writer Joe Straczynski—



Mira Furlan as Minbari Ambassador Delenn. Inset: Straczynski's original character concept sketched by designer Peter Ledger.



Green Room [at the convention]. I went up there and Bruce was very emotional. He said, 'Pat, Claudia is leaving us!' I said, 'What?' He sent me out to the fire escape to tell me. He said, 'Yeah, it's the contract negotiations and she needs out because she's doing this movie and they won't let her out to do this movie so she's not going to come back to the show.' He was just crushed. And I couldn't believe it. I couldn't imagine BABYLON 5 without Claudia and I think it suffered without Claudia. That's my opinion."

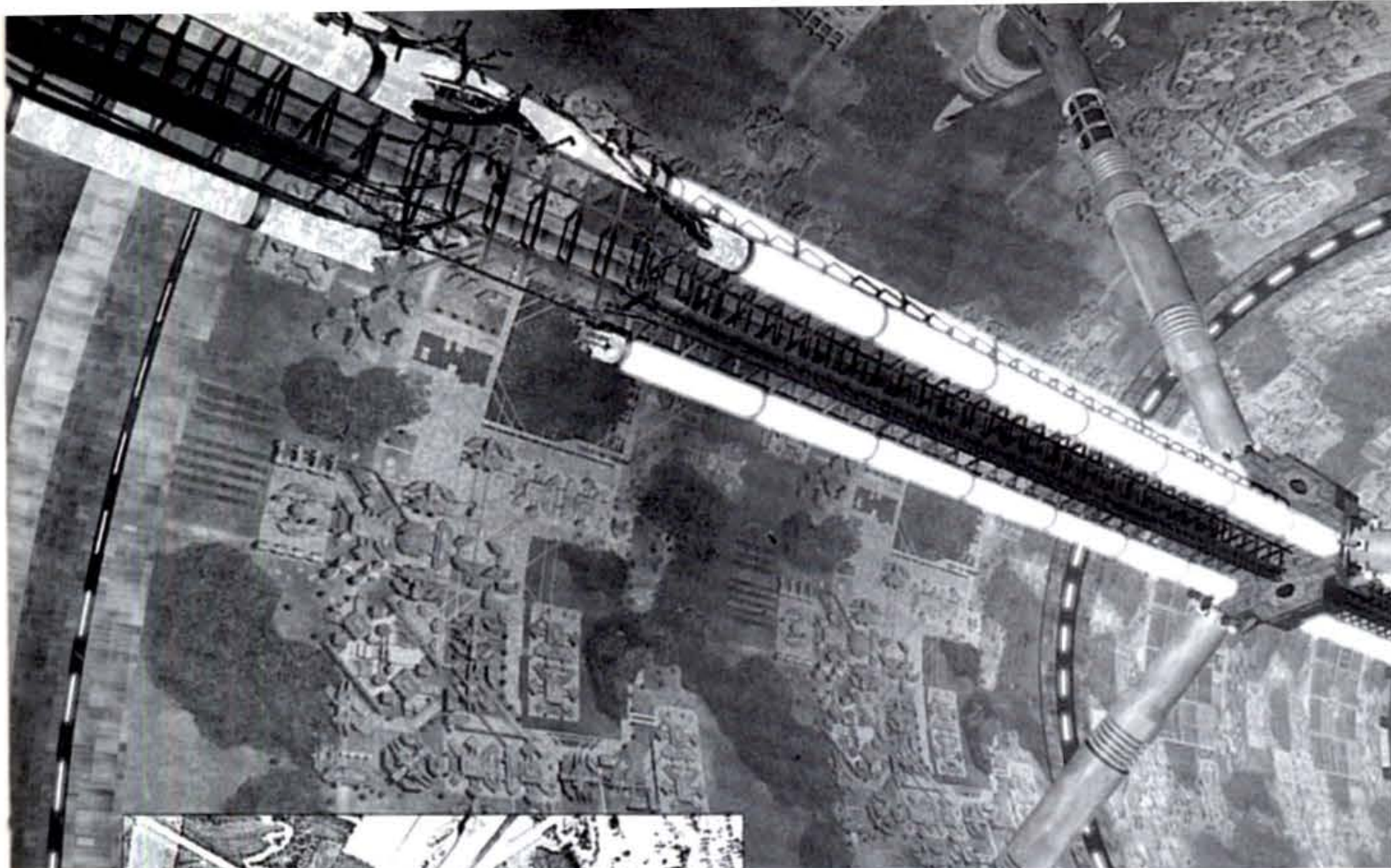
"I wished she could have stayed," said Boxleitner. "Claudia is still a rich part of the Babylon 5 story."

Because "Sleeping in Light" was filmed at the end of the fourth season, that meant that the actual final episode filmed was its penultimate story, "Objects at Rest." But life did not stop for the Babylonian producers. TNT commissioned two additional films: RIVER OF SOULS, which revisited the Soul Hunters from the first season and A CALL TO ARMS, which served as a transition film into CRUSADE, a new TNT series that also took place in the B5 universe which began airing June 1999. A

Invasion, Christian admitted that she did, in fact, quit the show. Christian felt that her departure did not affect the show. She said that Straczynski did not have a storyline for the fifth season and did not feel there was much for her to do. The bottom line was she did not want to experience another year of "not having any challenges."

Someone else had to be hired to take over the command of Babylon 5 because John Sheridan had been promoted to being the President of a new Galactic Alliance. Replacing what surely would have been Captain Ivanova was actress Tracy Scoggins as Captain Elizabeth Lochley. Ironically, the transition between characters was actually very smooth. Ivanova was written out as having taken command of a battlecruiser while Sheridan hired a woman from his distant past.

"I was really surprised that Claudia wasn't coming back," remarked Patricia Tallman. "It was in the



A bomb blasts the station's core shuttle in second season ender "The Fall of Night." Inset: Designer Ledger's sketch of Straczynski's original concept.

CALL TO ARMS introduced the Excalibur spacecraft and two members of the series' cast. Unfortunately, CRUSADE was cancelled by TNT at 13 of the planned 22 episodes over creative differences between the network and the series' producers.

In deconstructing BABYLON 5's success, we can point to several items: Straczynski presented a novel for television with 110 segments containing a diverse, accessible cast with a galactic landscape as the platform to present them. Foundation Imaging and Netter Digital's special effects technology played an integral role in making the universe exciting, "cool looking" and physically 3-D. Straczynski developed multi-faceted, original characters. Mystery and intrigue were integral storytelling tools that were used throughout the series.

Importantly, Straczynski did a very good job of keeping people guessing about every character's fate on the show. What Straczynski did that was different from any other dramatic show, is he weaved characters in and out of the tapestry with foresight and planning, while along the way, adjusting to the realities of linear film production. This meant that the so-called "pre-planned" five year saga was constantly being shuffled, juggled behind the scenes, very likely more than we will ever know.

"Any novelist knows that when you go from outline to book things take on a life of their own," explained Straczynski. "And characters you felt would be just background characters move to the foreground.

And what first you thought the story was about becomes something else. This is natural progression in any novel. The difference is you're seeing a novel in progress rather than the final finished product." Because Straczynski was well aware of this process, he did not write out his outlines in great detail. "[It] was not written out in specific detail until I got this series. You learn things when you're into a show like this.

"I like being surprised," Straczynski continued. "I love when I watch a show that I don't know what the hell is going to happen next. HILL STREET BLUES was a show that was that way for me. My job is that of the magician. I have to keep you watching my hand as they bring the elephant on stage."

For example, Straczynski was particularly proud that no one guessed the true facts surrounding the fate of Babylon 4, as revealed in the two-parter "War Without End," although many clues were planted in "Babylon Squared." "All the clues were there in plain sight but no one saw what they were. You misread clues and after you see the result you go back [to 'Babylon Squared'] and suddenly it all makes sense."

The cast and crew especially enjoyed the plot twists that Straczynski developed. They were as excited as devout fans were in catching the next episode. Jeffrey Willerth, producer's associate on the show, provided a unique perspective on how much the crew anticipated each week's release. "I would say in the third and fourth season, when most fans would say the story arc was getting really good, many of the crew, myself included, would do what we could to be among the first to get a glimpse of the scripts so we could sit down and read it!" said Willerth. "There was a great deal of excitement about what was going on. The story arc was getting so good, so interesting. Joe's writing was just peaking. It was just

"Eyes" is investigating all off-world military officers to check on loyalty and Col. Ari Ben Zayn (Gregory Martin) who was high on the list to command B5, believes Sinclair sold out Earth to the Minbari during the war and that's why he got the job. Earthforce won't back Sinclair against Zayn for political reasons. Zayn wants his Psi-Cop, Harriman Gray (Jeffrey Combs) to scan all the officers but Sinclair convinces Gray to scan the Colonel instead and they find out he's been using the investigation as an excuse to take control of the station. Lennier offers to assemble Garibaldi's antique motorcycle but becomes so absorbed in the task, he finishes the bike while Garibaldi is busy with the IA investigation. Ivanova refuses to be scanned. She threatens to resign over the matter, gets drunk and wrecks the bar in a fight.

"Eyes" had to be written in five days and put right into production," said Larry DiTillio. "That was because a script fell out, Joe got very sick and was just flat on his back. It had to use only one or two sets at most, and have one or two characters. I tell you it is probably my worst script. It came out better than any of us thought it would. And it did do something for an audience that maybe came late to the first season. They got a quick glance of everything that happened that season. If you really look at 'Eyes,' everything is given in very quick flashes. Here's when we went out to B4. Here's the labor strike. All of that stuff is in there. It came out okay."

"Eyes" was kind of a nasty one," recalled Jim Johnston. "Of all the ones I did it was probably the most difficult because the actor who played the Colonel was having a hard time in his life. He had left his wife for his female agent and then his female agent had kicked him out. I think he was living in his car. He was having an emotional roller coaster and that was present every day in the script. We actually had to re-shoot a couple of scenes, which is something you hardly ever do on B5."

Trivia: MILLENNIUM star Lance Henriksen was Larry DiTillio's original choice for the Colonel.



Col. Ari Ben Zayn (Gregory Martin) of Earthforce's Internal Affairs, nicknamed "Eyes," interrogates Sinclair, suspected of selling out to the Minbari.

"You talk like a Minbari, Commander."

—Neroon

LEGACIES

★★

7/20/1994. #115 Written by D.C. Fontana. Directed by Bruce Seth Green.

A young girl is caught for shoplifting, and is identified as an unregistered telepath. Ivanova and Talia disagree over what to do with her. When the body of the Minbari's greatest hero vanishes while lying in state on the station, tension runs high between Neroon (John Vickery) and the humans, as they search for the perpetrator. When Alisa scans Delenn and finds out what really happened, she tells Sinclair. Delenn had the body cremated as he had wished and orders Neroon to support her

story that it is a religious miracle or she will destroy his whole clan. Alisa decides to accept Delenn's offer to go to Minbar and study with their telepaths. Beginnings of a friendship between Ivanova and Talia Winters emerges.

"Dorothy Fontana is a writer who likes to write about human relationships," said DiTillio. "I thought she did very well. She has a good sense of history. Of all the freelancers, Dorothy probably fit in the best, because she is a veteran. She seemed to catch on to the characters and I think she added on something for Delenn. While I did do some rewriting on that, it's mostly her script. She also has a good sense of pageantry."

This episode marked Bruce Seth Green's final contribution to the series. Filming exclusively on the station was too claustrophobic for his tastes. "It drove me crazy that the show was inside all the time," said Green. "I just wasn't used to it. On every show I'd ever done, if it was a seven-day episode, it would be three days in and four days out or five days in and two days out. It just got very claustrophobic and it started getting stale. *BABYLON 5* was the first show that I ever worked on that was totally buttoned down. Because you have so many characters and so many sets, everything's there and everything's under control. You don't ever shoot an extra hour in any day because the producer says, 'Well, you'll be back in the same place tomorrow, just pick it up tomorrow.' So it becomes very regular. That's why I lost interest. It really is just too easy. I like to get outside."



Garibaldi and the Pak'Ma'Ra ambassador of the carrion eaters search for the missing corpse of one of Minbar's greatest heroes in "Legacies."

"The third principle of sentient life is the capacity for self-sacrifice, the conscious ability to override evolution and self-preservation for a cause, a friend, a loved one." —Draal

A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS (PT. 1) ★★★★★

7/27/1994. #120 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Janet Greek.

The survey ship checking out seismic activity on Epsilon 3, sets off defense mechanisms from within the world. One of the survey ship's pictures shows a fissure on the surface five miles deep. Draal (Louis Turenne), an old mentor visiting Delenn and Sinclair witnesses a strange apparition, a mysterious figure pleading for help. When Sinclair and Ivanova take a shuttle into the fissure to investigate, they discover gigantic alien machinery buried beneath the surface, an incredible defense system more powerful than anything known. They find Varn (Curt Lowens), a dying alien hooked up to the machines, and bring him back to the station's Med Lab. The struggle for Mars' independence breaks out into open revolt. Garibaldi frantically tries to contact the woman he left behind there.

fantastic."

Peter Jurasik agreed wholeheartedly. "Most of the time, you would read a script with an eye to your character, but honest to God, when the scripts would come in, I was page turning, reading everything."

Added Bruce Boxleitner, "The fun of the show—period—was I couldn't wait for the next script to see where we were going. I have to say Joe continually surprised me in the depth of the storylines. And where we were going, and what each character was going to go through. He made it interesting to do."

At the end of the second season, after Larry DiTillio's final script, "Knives," Straczynski began something that not even he could have predicted or expected to accomplish: a scripting marathon that stretched into a total of 48 scripts that were exclusively—save for one episode—written by him. The exception in this script-a-thon, was that in the middle of the fifth season, Straczynski invited famed British author Neil Gaiman to write "Day of the Dead." And Harlan Ellison contributed the story for "A View from the Gallery." In total, J. Michael Straczynski wrote 91 of the 110 episodes of *BABYLON 5*. And everyone who worked with him was completely, utterly astonished.

"Joe could turn out scripts faster than we could produce them," remarked director David Eagle. "They were damn good. The quality of the writing, the thoughtfulness of how the stories worked out, what the dialogue was, how the characters developed, where they were going, was amazing."

"It wasn't intentional," Straczynski candidly admitted. In the middle of the third season, after writing everything himself, he finally looked up from his computer and thought, "Okay, now I can start bringing in a couple of other writers." But the opportunity to have a single-writer marathon for an entire season occurred to someone and they mentioned it to him. "At which point I was screwed," said Straczynski. "Because when you lay down any kind of a challenge in front of me, I have to accept it. And I just fired the person who told me, because it

“What you thought the story was about becomes something else. This is natural in any novel. The difference is you’re seeing a novel in progress.”

—Writer Joe Straczynski—



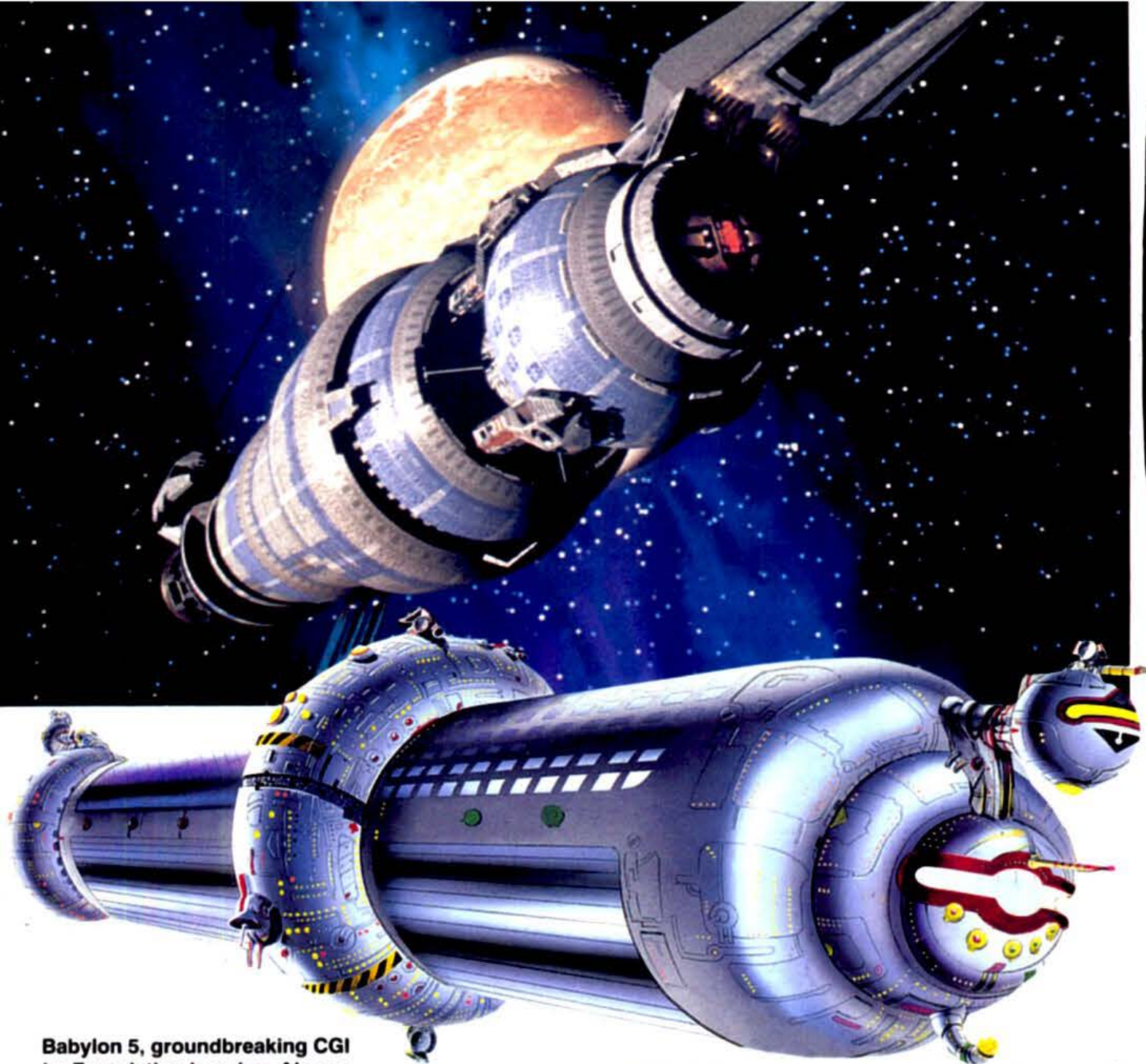
Jeffrey Willerth as Kosh, the Vorlon Ambassador. Inset: Straczynski's script concept as sketched by designer Peter Ledger.

Bruce Boxleitner. "People like an interesting storyline. I think it has enough there in the characters and relationships to attract just about anybody. I think you have a complete novel. That's basically what JMS set out to do. And he accomplished it! It was a tough road doing it."

"I think he gave a really good package," agreed Julie Caitlin Brown, who played Narn Na'Toth. "We'll be enjoying it for a very long time because there's so many layers. You can watch it again and again and keep finding nuances that you didn't see before. It's going to live for a long time in video land."

"I think JMS has given us an epic science fiction saga with more heart and soul, courage and depth, than anyone else has ever attempted let alone achieved," said David Gerrold.

Noted Peter Jurasik, "What Joe gave you is what he set out to do. He gave you a wonderful rich story filled with truly memorable people and characters that will live inside you. He did what all good stories and what all good art tries to do, present something that helps us examine who we are and how we interact, and reflects our world."



Babylon 5, groundbreaking CGI by Foundation Imaging. Above: Designer Peter Ledger's original concepts were strikingly different.

"He gave his actors a challenge of developing in such an interesting way," said Walter Koenig who played Psi Cop Bester. "I think it's a wonderful novel. When you see it in reruns in 10 years from now, it won't feel dated."

"An amazing piece of work that wasn't able to reach its full potential, mainly due to the indecision of WB and related problems," said screenwriter Christy Marx. "The series would have benefited tremendously had Joe been able to pace it and tell it the way it was originally intended. Instead, he had to cram events of season four and five into season four, then was left with a weaker season five. Personally, I would have preferred a little less talking heads and more action overall, but it was a monumental achievement to do such a long and complex story arc across five years. And he created two of the richest characters on TV—Londo and G'Kar."

"BABYLON 5 will be around forever," said Patricia Tallman. "Joe's done something like *Lord of the Rings* for TV science fiction. I think it's extraordinarily unusual. I'm very proud of it. Anything after this will just be a copy. They'll try to copy what he did."

For the final word on BABYLON 5, the series' executive producer and author, J. Michael Straczynski intoned, "I think we have something quite extraordinary,

which is going to be perceived as such more and more with the passing of time. No one's done anything like it before, and I don't know if anyone will ever try it again.

"I was asked to speak at MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] a few months back, and the big gun academics at the Media Lab and elsewhere stated that there are three seminal American SF series: the original STAR TREK, TWILIGHT ZONE, and BABYLON 5. If that's true, that's one hell of an accomplishment.

"It took STAR TREK nearly 20 years to hit this kind of response, but B5 still doesn't have the penetration in the popular culture that TREK had at that point. The impact the show has made is narrow, but deep. It was a massive strike into the popular culture, which will only continue to widen with the passage of time.

"For myself, I wanted to tell a story that, once seen, you would put on the shelf and take down from time to time, to enjoy with a new perspective every few years, as I periodically reread *Lord of the Rings* or the *Foundation* books or *Childhood's End*. It is a contemporary myth that asks questions that will be as relevant in the coming century as they are today.

"Some chapters here and there may be uneven, but on balance, it is a story well told, about characters we care about, and which causes us to reflect on our own lives, on who we are, and where we're going, and I don't think any writer can reasonably ask for much more than that."



Sinclair and Ivanova investigate an incredibly powerful subterranean alien defense system on Epsilon 3, an homage to FORBIDDEN PLANET.

In one shot of the Great Machine's interior, the camera tilts downward from the ceiling and we witness the planet-sized machinery at work as Sinclair and Ivanova walk across a bridge. Knowledgeable fans will recognize the similarity between this shot and a 1956 SF classic film. The allusion was not accidental. "They had me watch FORBIDDEN PLANET," said director Janet Greek. "It was really sort of a homage to that, and we talked a lot about how to do that. There were lots of conversations and lots of drawings about how this was all going to look and how we were going to do it. I think it just turned out really well."

Larry DiTillio noted that veteran actor Mark Hamill was slated for a role in a discarded conception of this two-parter. "He was supposed to be a member of the original race that had put the Great Machine there," said DiTillio. "To be honest to Joe, and to applaud Joe, he said, 'I don't really like this two-parter. This is not the way I wanted this to come out. I don't want to film it. I'll just shelve it. Mark Hamill saw it and said, 'It's not the quality of the episode I want it to be.' Joe had to come up with another episode. And that's what we saw, 'Voice in the Wilderness.' That script was just completely changed from Joe's original draft of it."

"The machine that controls this planet needs a mind to run it or it will destroy itself and Babylon 5 along with it."

—Delenn

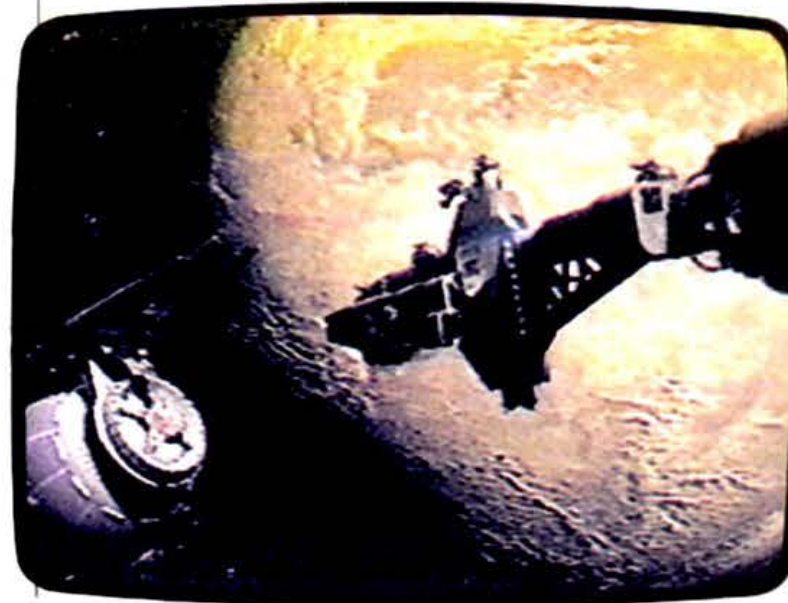
A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS (PT. 2)

★★★ 1/2

8/3/1994, #121 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Janet Greek.

Varn's (Curt Lowens) race have been dead for 500 years except for a violent faction that has been

Babylon 5 and an Earthforce Battleship in orbit around Epsilon 3, vying for the ultimate power in the universe in "A Voice in the Wilderness, II."



THE GATHERING

The story behind casting the acting talent that brought Straczynski's epic SF vision vividly to life.

By Frank Garcia

To give form to his dream for *BABYLON 5* creator and executive producer Joe Straczynski, along with producers Doug Netter and John Copeland, and guided by casting director Mary Jo Slater were very careful in casting their actors for the 1993 series pilot film "The Gathering."

As actress Patricia Tallman noted, the chosen cast did not have a strong "TV Q" rating, the recognition factor by audiences at large. Producers chose to fill the roles with experienced and capable actors and not cast it with celebrity players. Most identifiable among the initial cast was probably Peter Jurasik. Audiences knew Jurasik from many, varied television and film roles, notably a three year stint beginning in 1985, on *HILL STREET BLUES* as Sid "The Snitch."

In common among most of the actors: theatrical stage experience. Many of them had notable film or television credits, but it was imperative for Straczynski to present a fresh-faced, high quality but diverse cast with "low baggage" from other roles. Stage backgrounds were a valued commodity for *BABYLON 5* because in many ways, the series was an epic stage opera on film.

To put a personality and face on the hero of his adventure, Straczynski anointed Chicago-born actor Michael O'Hare as Jeffrey Sinclair, a pivotal figure from the Earth-Minbari conflict. A veteran stage and television actor, the New York-based O'Hare was a graduate of Juilliard who had been acting for 20 years and had stage credits like *A FEW GOOD MEN*, *MAN AND SUPERMAN* and *GALILEO*. "I worked with Angela Lansbury in *RAGE OF ANGELS: THE STORY CONTINUES* (1986) and I worked with Tony LoBianco in *MARCIANO* (1979), a TV movie," said O'Hare.

For O'Hare, being cast on *BABYLON 5* was part of a constant effort to find work. "It was like a lot of auditions that I have gone on—hundreds—over the years," he said.



Mira Furlan as Minbari Ambassador Delenn, featuring the androgynous look of the show's pilot, "The Gathering." The Yugoslav refugee was an experienced stage actress.

Patricia Tallman found herself in a rare situation during the casting sessions for "The Gathering." Tallman had auditioned for the role of Lyta Alexander, the station's resident telepath for the insidious Psi Corps. While sitting in a waiting room to prepare for her reading, a tall man—a stranger to her, entered and approached her. He hastily explained that the role of Lyta Alexander was written for her. "Good luck!" said Joe Straczynski and he then dashed out in a hurry. As Tallman sat there stunned, another prospective actor in the room just looked on

and deadpanned, "No pressure, huh?" Straczynski wrote the character for Tallman because he saw her gritty performance in George Romero's *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* (1990).

"We went through the so-called 'callbacks,' " explained Tallman. "Usually, a 'callback' means you are brought in with a select few—and then you audition with that smaller group and you're chosen from there. You may have a series of callbacks. It can be very difficult, emotional and stressful. If you make good choices, they might like you. But you don't know what's going to kick you into getting the part. Everyone at the callback were very amped up and excited. I was talking to Blaire Baron, Tamlyn Tomita, Michael O'Hare and we were all going, 'It's great!'"

"John Copeland, Joe Straczynski and director Richard Compton sat us all down at this big table and said, 'You are our chosen cast!' Our mouths all hit the table. We just couldn't believe it."

"Basically we were there to do our song and dance for Warner Bros, to get approval by the suits. We were there to do it again, put it on tape and get better scenes, like my scene with Andreas Katsulas. The 'What's your pleasure threshold' scene. That was the one instance that we were all together before we started shooting the pilot."

Because actress Tamlyn Tomita (as Lt. Commander Laurel Takashima) didn't want to do a series, Claudia Christian was cast as Sinclair's Russian-born and loyal second-in-command Lt. Commander Susan Ivanova. Her personality was such that in one moment, she could be professional and serious and in the next, be fast with a quip.

For the alien ambassadors, Straczynski and casting director Slater looked for actors who were willing to take a job with the additional challenge of working with elaborate makeup prosthetics attached to their faces in order to convey their alienness.

Mira Furlan became Ambassador Delenn from the Minbari Federation. Originally from the now-extinct Yugoslavia, Furlan



Peter Jurasik as Centauri Ambassador Londo Mollari and Andreas Katsulas as Narn Ambassador G'Kar, wary enemies who grow strangely attached during the series' five-year saga, casting serendipity.

did 25 films and five television series in her native land. She won many awards and did "all of the classics" and was part of the National Theater Company, a stage repertory group before migrating to the United States with her husband Gajic. She was living in New York at the time when "The Gathering" was being cast. "I did an audition for the pilot and I completely forgot about it," said Furlan. "You know, it was just one of the auditions that you do, and then they called me back. And then nothing happened and then they called me back again and they called me to California and I did the pilot."

According to "The Gathering's" director, Richard Compton, he fought hard to get Furlan hired as Delenn. "I kept going back to her even though we saw a lot of people," he said. "There was the network saying, 'We have too many people with accents.' But eventually, I think I prevailed in my admiration for her as an actress and I think in the end it proved very beneficial to the show. I think she's quite wonderful."

To have an experienced stage actress from Eastern Europe who literally was entering into a new world, and then to be asked to become an extraterrestrial for a science fiction television project was just about as exotic as it could get for Furlan. "I knew very little about science fiction in general," she said. "It's a weird thing, but

one of the rare shows that came to Yugoslavia when I was a kid was LOST IN SPACE, and now I'm playing with that kid!" laughed Furlan, about the casting of Billy Mumy. "But I never knew that there was this huge science fiction world, so I couldn't really imagine what it's all about. It was totally new and strange for me."

"But, at that time, I thought about it as another adventure in my life. 'Let's see what I can do with that. Let's see what I can do when I'm restricted that much.' It's a totally different working experience."

Joining Delenn as her devoutly loyal and polite aide Lennier, was former child actor Bill Mumy. He was most famous for being boy-genius Will Robinson in LOST IN SPACE, the 1965-68 TV series. Straczynski originally auditioned him for a guest appearance but wound up offering him a cast role. Mumy was a multi-talented individual who was musically inclined, wrote scripts and comics, acted in features like PAPPION (1973) and grew up in Hollywood from a very young age.

For Andreas Katsulas and Peter Jurasik, being cast on BABYLON 5 as G'Kar and Londo, two arch-enemies from the Narn Empire and the Centauri Republic, was an experience that both felt was serendipitous and rare, as Jurasik explained. "The script came to me the way all scripts have come to me, through my

searching for Epsilon 3 all that time. Varn's mission is to keep it out of anyone's hands. Sinclair has this and Capt. Ellis Pierce (Ron Canada) from Earthforce to contend with. Varn is dying and looking for a replacement. Draal is chosen and he's found what he's been looking for: purpose in life. In the end, Draal warns everyone via holographic projection, to stay away from Epsilon 3. Garibaldi finally contacts Lise Hampton (Denise Gentile) on Mars but there is no hope for reconciliation; she's married and pregnant.

Director Janet Greek said most memorable about "Voice" was that the Great Machine set held by Varn was a difficult set because the script had called for an earthquake. "It was really hard to rig it because it had to collapse," she said. "The machine that the guy was hooked into was quite interesting. It went through several big changes before it was something that we were all happy with. But I think that it really worked well in the end."

"The passions we deplore have taken them to their place in the stars and will propel them to a great destiny. Their only weakness is that they do not recognize their own greatness. They are the future."

—Delenn speaking of the humans to the Gray Council

BABYLON SQUARED

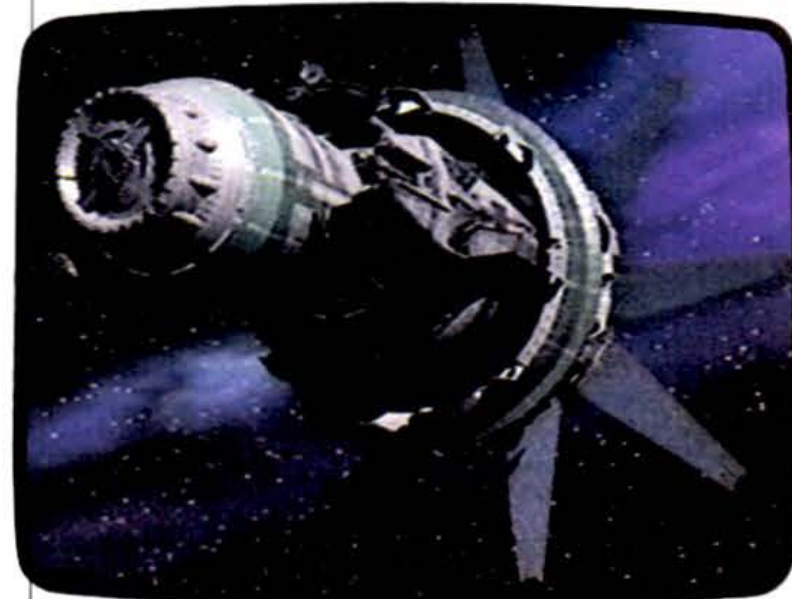
★★★★

8/10/1994. #118 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Jim Johnston.

Sinclair and Garibaldi answer a strange distress call in Sector 14. Babylon 4, the station that vanished four years ago, has reappeared. They meet an alien named Zathras (Tim Choate), who recognizes Sinclair. Zathras reveals that a great war is coming and that The One will gather troops from all over the galaxy to battle the coming darkness. Babylon 4 has been pulled through time to be used in this battle but the effort is too unstable, and after being evacuated, B4 vanishes again. The One is able to stabilize the time flux and we see that it is an older Sinclair and Delenn's voice is heard. Delenn meets the Gray Council. They have chosen her to become the next leader but she shocks them by being the first Satai to ever refuse the honor in 1,000 years. A friend on the Council warns Delenn that she may be cast out entirely and gives her the Triluminary.

At the time this was written and filmed, no one but Straczynski knew that there was a "flipside" episode planned. At some point in the series' future, Straczynski had planned to tell the other side of the story but didn't know when. "That was our most problematic episode," remembered DiTillio. "It was obviously written so that Sinclair and Delenn down the line were meant to be lovers. Of course, that all had to be changed. That changed on the fly as Joe covered Sinclair's departure in 'War Without End.'"

Babylon 4, the station that vanished four years earlier, reappears in "Babylon Squared," a key time travel episode bookended later in the series.



"Here you will see the heart and soul of Babylon 5, also its spleen, its kidneys, a veritable parade of internal organs."

—Londo

THE QUALITY OF MERCY

★★★

8/17/1994, #117 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Lorraine Senna Ferrara.

Dr. Laura Rosen (June Lockhart) is healing people in Downbelow with a strange alien device that transfers life force from one person to another, originally used as a means of corporal punishment so the criminal could pay for his crimes by healing others with his life. Ombuds Wellington (Jim Norton) sentences a murderer to be brain-wiped and spend his remaining life serving the community he has harmed. Dr. Franklin discovers Laura is dying of a disease and draining bits of her life to heal patients. When the killer, Karl Mueller (Mark Rolston), escapes and threatens to kill Rosen's daughter Janice (Kate McNeil), Dr. Rosen uses the alien device to transfer his life force to herself. She executes him, saves her daughter and as a side effect cures herself, but she is deeply disturbed that she has taken a life even to save her child. Meanwhile, Londo takes Lennier on a tour of the seamy side of the station and teaches him poker.

Director Lorraine Ferrara only did one episode for the series because, as her colleague Janet Greek explained, the series was too difficult for her. "She never finished it," said Greek. "It was too bad. I was there. I kept trying to help her. It's a real male show and unless you really can get into that mix and feel comfortable, and unless you love science fiction, it's a pretty hard show to do. If you're doing drama, science fiction is a lot harder than everybody thinks it is. It is not a genre that anybody can just jump into. She didn't care about science fiction and she just didn't fit. That happens with directors."



Londo takes Lennier (Bill Mumy) on a tour of the seamier side of the station and teaches him how to play poker in "The Quality of Mercy."

"Tell the Commander he was right. We are at a crossroads and there's no going back."

—G'Kar

**"And so it begins. You have forgotten something."
"Delenn!"**

—Kosh and Sinclair

CHRYSLIS

★★★★

10/26/1994, #112 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Janet Greek.

Sinclair and Catherine (Julia Nickson) announce their engagement to Ivanova and Garibaldi. Morden (Ed Wasser) makes Londo an offer he can't refuse: Morden's associates will "deal" with the Narn problem in Sector 37 and Londo takes all the credit. Later, when Londo learns 10,000 Narn were slaughtered and worries what the price will be, Morden says, "Just a favor in the future." Delenn offers to reveal to Sinclair



Shadow ships wipe out a Narn fleet like swatting flies in "Chrysalis," a favor proffered to Londo by Morden to cure the Narn problem in Sector 37.

the truth about his missing 24 hours. She has decided to ignore the Grey Council's wishes and enter the Chrysalis for some kind of transformation. Garibaldi is shot in the back by his own aide (Macaulay Bruton) when he uncovers a conspiracy to assassinate President Santiago. EarthForce One, the president's starship, explodes. When G'Kar gets the report about the destruction of the outpost in Quadrant 13 he leaves for the homeworld without an explanation for Na'toth.

This episode was filmed as the series' 12th episode because of the post-production time needed to create the special effects. "That was a wonderful episode to do," said director Janet Greek. "There was a lot more that I wanted to do that I couldn't do. I just didn't have time. That was kind of frustrating. The Chrysalis itself was a real conundrum for all of us, in getting it to look right and getting it to reflect light in the right way. It was quite a big achievement. That was a really packed show and I just tried to make everything flow visually as much as I could to help it along, but it didn't really need much help. The show was just really well written."

Trivia: To follow the adventures of Jeffrey Sinclair, and to learn about his experiences on Minbar as Earth's ambassador, pick up a copy of Dell Publishing's BABYLON 5 novel #9, *To Dream in the City of Sorrows* written by Kathryn Drennan, who is Joe Straczynski's wife.

SEASON TWO "The Coming of Shadows"

"Minbari souls are being reborn, in part or in full, in Human bodies"

—Lennier to Sheridan and Ivanova

POINTS OF DEPARTURE

★★★

11/02/1994, #201 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Janet Greek.

General Hague (Robert Foxworth) tells Capt.

Delenn makes an appearance in the B5 council chambers after undergoing her transformation by Chrysalis to half-human form in "Revelations."



John Sheridan (Bruce Boxleitner) he's taking command of Babylon 5 as Sinclair has been permanently reassigned as the first human ambassador to Minbar. Garibaldi remains in a coma. Delenn is still cocooned. G'Kar hasn't returned and a Minbari warship full of renegade warrior castes who could not accept the decision to surrender at the Battle of the Line show up looking for a fight. Hedronn (Robin Sachs) of the Grey Council has come to tell Delenn that if the renegade Minbari cruiser Trigati appears, the humans must be told a secret. Lennier reveals to Ivanova and Sheridan that the Grey Council discovered that some humans have Minbari souls including Sinclair. That's why they surrendered and that's the secret that was erased from Sinclair's memory. Kalain (Richard Grove), the leader of the renegades, is also on the station to set a plot in motion to force the humans into destroying the Trigati and making martyrs of them.



Hedronn of the Grey Council tells Delenn that if renegade Minbari cruiser Trigati appears, humans must be told the secret of their Minbari souls.

According to director Janet Greek, the transition from Sinclair to Sheridan was quite abrupt. "Everybody was kind of surprised, but it was smooth. Bruce came in like a real pro and just got right into it. I gave him a lot of help and he's a wonderful actor so he just needed some guidance and reassurance, trying to find his character. Yet, because it was the first episode of the new season, we all wanted it to feel his character was fairly established, and because he was the commander he needed to have that feeling about him. The actors were very supportive of him. It was a difficult situation. It's hard when somebody gets let go and difficult for the new person stepping in.

"The thing that was so funny to me was that Bruce was really nervous because he really wanted to do a good job. And he was just doing an incredible job and nothing I could say to him could convince him that he was really doing well. He was just so completely dedicated towards being the best that he could possibly be that he just couldn't believe that he wasn't doing terribly in the beginning. He was so happy to have the role and so anxious to do it well and be what Joe wanted it to be."

"We must warn the others, Na'toth. After a thousand years, the Darkness has come again."

—G'Kar

REVELATIONS

★★★ 1/2

11/09/1994, #202 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Jim Johnston.

Sheridan's sister Elizabeth (Beverly Leech) visits and they discover that his wife Anna died on the Icarus, an archaeological survey ship destroyed on a dead world called Z'ha'dum. When the doctor wants to try using the alien machine he acquired in "Quality of Mercy" as a last hope to save Garibaldi, Sheridan donates some of his life essence to help. Garibaldi reawakens but does not remember what happened

agent. We're always looking for interesting characters. They said, 'Go ahead and read it and see who you'd be interested in reading for.' I immediately gravitated to Londo. I just liked the way he was written and went in and had a casting call.

"When I called Joe after reading the pilot, I said, 'Do you have any ideas you want me to pass on?' He said, 'You know what? It's wide open to you. Do what you'd like to do with it. I'd love to see you put your stuff on.' Well, that sort of *carte blanche* is a wonderful thing for a producer to say.

"The interesting story about the casting call is—I don't know how many people they must have seen overall and, you know, they mix the casting calls up—but Andreas and I ended up being back to back in our auditions. So, we sat out in the waiting room and chatted a little bit and I went in, and then he went in. I'm sure they did weeks of casting."

Even more interesting is that Jurasik was not available for callbacks because he was working at the time, and so with one audition, Londo came alive. For two actors to snatch roles they were reading for, within the space of 15 minutes apart, was perhaps a testament to how sometimes the actor and the role just falls together. "It really is long odds in terms of the casting process to think that we were booked at 2:15 and 2:30 on that day," chuckled Jurasik. "We think they came into a nice run of luck there."

"Pete and I, we got along famously off-stage as well as on-stage," noted Andreas Katsulas. "I think we got a kick out of being buddies and then going in and tearing each other apart on the stage. Some of that bleeds out, sometimes we kid each other as though we were the characters when we're not."

As Londo's faithful but timid attache Vir Cotto, Stephen Furst was given a role that allowed him to swing wildly from light, seriocomic moments to dark tragedy. Before arriving aboard the station, Furst was already a familiar face to television and film audiences for his appearances in *ST. ELSEWHERE* as Doctor Elliot Axelrod and in National Lampoon's *ANIMAL HOUSE* (1978) as "Flounder" with John Belushi.

“Once the studio decided to go with Bruce, [Boxleitner] they wanted to expunge Sinclair from the collective memory of mankind, which was not possible.”

—Story Editor, Larry DiTillio—



Patricia Tallman as telepath Lyta Alexander, a role tailor-made for the pilot and then dropped until third season.

(who later guested on the show as "King Arthur" in "A Late Delivery from Avalon.") "Michael was one of the actors considered to replace O'Hare," said DiTillio. "At which point Warner Brothers said they didn't want an Englishman, because they had an Englishman on *STAR TREK*.

"Once the studio decided to go with Bruce, they wanted to expunge Sinclair from the collective memory of mankind, which was not possible," grinned Larry DiTillio.

Noted Boxleitner, "[*BABYLON 5*] answered a bunch of things for me in my life and this point in my career. Nothing really tweaked my imagination. I did watch this show the first season, I only saw a few of them, since I never watch every episode of anything. I thought it was kind of interesting. It was a different alternative to the *STAR TREK* shows. Jon Frakes is a good friend of mine, and I don't want to say anything bad about *TREK*. Basically, their fans are our fans too. It just had this different look and feel to it. Darker, grittier looking, and it just attracted me. It reminded me a lot of *OUTLAND* and the two *ALIEN* movies. It had that feel of a more military-industrial look to it." □

After a productive first season, Straczynski decided that he needed to change his leading man and hire a new actor to climb aboard the station and take command. The producers and O'Hare separated very amicably, and it was understood that Sinclair would return in later episodes.

To spin the saga into different directions, inviting new opportunities and problems, Captain John Sheridan was born. According to David Bassom's book *Creating Babylon 5*, the producers cast a very wide net for diverse types of actors to play Sheridan. They looked at Anthony Andrews, Roger Reece, A. Martinez and James Earl Jones. According to Larry DiTillio, *B5*'s story editor, Warner Bros "were hot on Gregory Harrison [of TV's *LOGAN'S RUN* fame]. We said, 'Oh, Jesus!' One of the worst actors we've ever seen." DiTillio also revealed that the role was actually offered to Michael York

to scan him. It turns out his aide (Macauley Bruton) shot him. After he's caught, Sheridan is ordered to send the prisoner and all evidence to Earth but somehow he disappears enroute and never goes back to trial. G'Kar narrowly escapes from an attack and returns with confirmation of his worst fears in "Chrysalis." He witnesses Shadow ships attacking Narn warships, and they look like a drawing in the Book of G'Quan of an ancient evil.

Ivanova is conspicuously absent in this show because Claudia Christian broke her foot during shooting. They wrote it into the next episode's script to explain the cast.

In an alternate vision of the series, if Lt. Commander Laurel Takashima from the pilot had been in the series, she would have been the one who betrays Garibaldi. "Laurel would eventually have been found to be working under a Psi Corps telepathic personality implant," revealed Joe Straczynski. "She herself was not aware of what she was doing at the time. When the information came to light, she would have been removed from her position, at which point, yes, someone else would have to come in as second in command."



Delenn emerges from the Chrysalis and becomes half human, treated by Dr. Franklin in her quarters at Lenier's request in "Revelations."

"There is a storm coming, a black and terrible storm. We would not have our knowledge lost or used to ill purpose." —Elric about why the Technomages are leaving.

THE GEOMETRY OF SHADOWS ★★★

11/16/1994. #203 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Michael Vejar.

The Technomages are an ancient group who use technology to create what seems like magic. They sense something bad is coming and stop at the station on their way to the other side of the galactic rim. Londo tries various ways to get their leader, Elric (Michael Ansara) to give him an endorsement, but only receives a dire warning about his future. Garibaldi recovers enough to return to duty but his faith in himself is shaken and he doesn't know if he trusts Sheridan or more importantly, if Sheridan trusts him. Sheridan gives Ivanova a promotion and her first diplomatic assignment: settle the dispute between the Drazi's on the station. When one faction of the Drazi capture Ivanova and use her comlink to lead the other faction into a death trap, Garibaldi is the only one suspicious enough to realize something's wrong and he realizes that he should stay on as security chief because they need him.

Larry DiTillio said he enjoyed working with Michael Ansara, an actor he grew up watching on television in *BROKEN ARROW* and *STAR TREK*. "Michael had to be cued a lot, I'll tell you that," said DiTillio. "He's a fine actor but has a lousy memory. That's no big deal. You go through that with some actors who have problems with certain lines and you have to cue them during the

CLAUDIA CHRISTIAN

The actress behind B5's second in command, Lt. Cmdr. Susan Ivanova, on her cossack role in space.

By David Bassom

When Claudia Christian won the role of Susan Ivanova in *BABYLON 5*, she had no idea how long her assignment to the Earth Alliance space station would last. "I read three scripts and I knew that the show was going to be very good quality," she explains, "but I also knew that nothing in the science fiction genre, besides the *STAR TREK* shows, had survived more than a season or so. So I didn't feel that I was investing my life in it; I really didn't know how long the show was going to run. However, after the first season, when Bruce [Boxleitner, Captain Sheridan] came along, I thought we had a far better shot at completing this five-year saga."

Christian made her debut as Lieutenant Commander Ivanova in *BABYLON 5*'s first season premiere, "Midnight On The Firing Line," and was introduced as a replacement for Tamlyn Tomita, who had played the station's original first officer, Laurel Takashima, in the show's feature-length pilot, "The Gathering." "They were looking for someone who had more authority," she recalled. "Tamlyn Tomita is a very good actress, but they were looking for someone who was a bit taller and a bit tougher, and I guess I fit the bill! I went in and got the part within a few hours."

Upon landing the role, Christian received a brief description of Susan Ivanova's background and personality, but was left totally in the dark as to what fate had in store for her character—if anything! Fortunately, the actress was delighted by the way Ivanova was developed.

"The character has changed substantially since the beginning," she explained. "In the first year, she was rather uptight and ultra-



Christian as the stern Ivanova, a departure from the light comedic roles the actress was best known for. Inset: Christian's stronger presence replaced the pilot's Tamlyn Tomita as Laurel Takashima.

militaristic because she was the new kid on the block and wanted to do her job really well. Then, during the second season, she felt more at ease with her surroundings and more secure in her job, especially when she was promoted [to the rank of full Commander]. She was particularly pleased about the assignment of Captain Sheridan, who she had worked with before. Things like that really helped lighten Ivanova up."

Although Ivanova has increasingly displayed a sense of fun as the series has progressed, one of the second season's latter

installments, "Divided Loyalties," revealed something that the acerbic Earth-Force officer had desperately tried to keep secret: she was a latent telepath. More controversially, the episode also had Ivanova developing an intimate—perhaps even romantic—relationship with telepath Talia Winters, who is subsequently exposed as an unwitting Psi Corps spy.

"It's up to you to perceive what you want to perceive," said Christian of her character's relationship with Talia. "I know what I personally believe, but maybe a child wouldn't pick up on anything sexual. Any kids who saw the show might have thought that Ivanova was just giving Talia a place to sleep. Of course, other people might say, 'Well, yeah, then why did she wake up and touch the other side of the bed if Talia wasn't there?' So it's really up to the viewer to decide how to interpret it."

"In my mind, something happened. I think that Ivanova always had a deep feeling, an attraction and a deep love for [Talia] and she got totally betrayed by her. So there goes another brick on her proverbial wall."

According to Christian, *BABYLON 5*'s third season proved to be Susan Ivanova's finest year. As the Army of Light engaged the Shadows in all-out war, Ivanova found herself charged with more diplomatic duties, embarked on several dangerous missions on the White Star, and developed a love/hate relationship with Ranger Marcus Cole (Jason Carter). "Ivanova really became a much bigger part of the storyline third season," she stated. "She was given a lot more responsibility, and I got to do the opening narration, which was nice."

Surprise developments and unexpected plot twists are, of course, two of *BABYLON 5*'s most appealing trademarks. Probably the biggest—and most traumatic—change to the show's format came at the beginning of its second season, when Michael



Christian and Andreas Katsulas as G'Kar in second season's "The Fall of Night," watching in awe as Kosh the Vorlon Ambassador unveils himself and everyone sees a vision of their own race's mythic Gods.

O'Hare (who played Babylon 5's original commander, Jeffrey Sinclair) was replaced by Bruce Boxleitner as the series' leading man.

"The fans balked when the news was announced," revealed Christian, "and I would just say, 'Give Bruce a chance.' He's been really great. Michael's a great guy and I wish him all the best, but I work better with Bruce. Our relationship has a lot more colors and a lot more depth than Ivanova and Sinclair's."

Christian credited Boxleitner for playing a key role in fostering a "family-atmosphere" on the set of BABYLON 5. "Bruce was very enthusiastic about the role. He wore his BABYLON 5 hat and jacket everywhere! He believed in the show, but at the same time, he wanted everyone to enjoy working on the show. That made for a very happy set."

The actress was equally full of praise for the show's aforementioned creator, J. Michael Straczynski. "I had total faith in Joe. I was a pawn in his chess game. It was up to me to hit my marks and say my lines. I was constantly amazed by the imagination of his work."

Straczynski's imagination was put to the test during the shooting of the second season episode "The Geometry of Shadows," when Christian informed him what had happened on her day off! "It was my birthday and I was acting like I was 12 years old—I tried to catch a bird in my garden. I did a flying leap and broke my foot! Joe Straczynski immediately rewrote the episode so that the Drazi fell on Ivanova and her foot was broken. I thought it worked really well; it was a cute little episode."

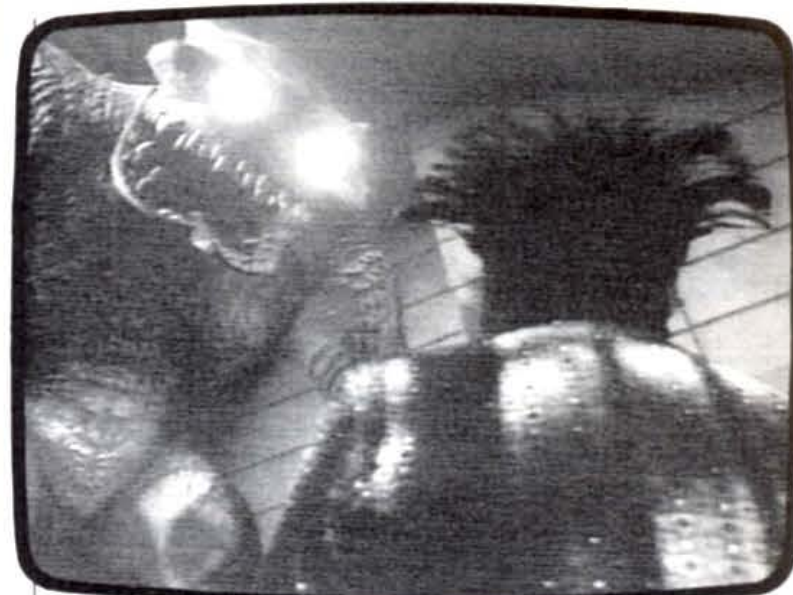
Alongside "The Geometry of Shadows,"

Christian's other favorite episodes of BABYLON 5 include "TKO" and "Acts Of Sacrifice." Noted Christian, "I liked working on 'TKO' because I had some heavy drama and I got to work with Theodore Bikel. 'Acts of Sacrifice' was fun because it was one of the first chances I had to do some comedy on the show."

In the years since her debut as Susan Ivanova, Christian has been inundated with mail from the show's fans and has become a regular guest speaker at science fiction conventions around the world. "I have no problems with the celebrity aspects of the job," she said. "I enjoy being recognized, signing autographs and posing for photos with the fans. At first, I didn't understand or expect the intensity of their love, but it's something I've gotten used to."

Ironically, while Christian is best known for her portrayal of Susan Ivanova, the character is unlike anyone she had ever played before. Prior to boarding BABYLON 5, she had played a diverse range of roles in such films and TV as THE HIDDEN, CLEAN AND SOBER, ARENA, NEVER ON TUESDAY, QUANTUM LEAP, MURDER SHE WROTE, L. A. LAW, COLUMBO and SPACE RANGERS, to name but a few. More surprisingly, Christian had developed a deep affection for absurd comedy, which she best displayed in Columbia Pictures' black comedy HEXED. Thus, playing a stern, repressed military officer in a syndicated TV series represented quite a departure for the vibrant and fun-loving actress.

"When I first heard about BABYLON 5, I was worried about being tied down to a TV show," she recalled. "At the time, I really wanted to move away from TV to pursue a movie career; I think every actor wants to



Vir encounters the holimage of a dragon when he goes to visit the TechnoMages, an ancient group that uses technology as if it were magic.

scene. Quite a few takes with Michael. What came out of it was good but it was like pulling teeth."

This episode was a good spotlight of Claudia Christian's abilities. "It was great for Claudia," said DiTillio. "She handles comedy very well. She just didn't get to do a lot of it. She's a terrific comic actress."

Trivia: Claudia Christian broke her foot and so the injury was written into this episode.

"There's the story she told us, but then the Minbari never tell you the whole truth."

—Sheridan about Delenn's transformation.

A DISTANT STAR

★★

11/23/1994. #204 Written by D.C. Fontana. Directed by Jim Johnston.

Capt. Maynard (Russ Tamblyn), Sheridan's first commander stops off at the station but his visit disturbs Sheridan who starts to feel he has been "beached" to a desk job. Later when Maynard's ship gets lost in hyperspace Sheridan uses a kind of bucket-brigade tactic to rescue him. Lt. Keffer sees a Shadow ship while in hyperspace and becomes obsessed with finding out what it is. Maynard also said he saw "something" out near the rim. When the squadron leader's ship is destroyed by a Shadow ship Keffer is the new leader.

The means used in this episode to save Lt. Keffer's lost Starfury has historical roots. "The way they saved the ship was the way they did that with ships in the 1800s," noted DiTillio. "If they had a problem, they'd send a string of small boats out to the ship that was stranded. It became a lifeline for them. Dorothy Fontana is very good at taking historical stuff and putting it into SF. That's how we writers get a lot of our stories. What could be better than what actually happened? And it worked."

Russ Tamblyn as Captain Maynard, Sheridan's first commander, tells tales of the weird things he's seen out on the rim in "A Distant Star."



**"You were just about to accuse the Centauri ambassador of being in league with the devil—which might not be too far from the truth."
—Garibaldi to Amis**

THE LONG DARK

★★

11/30/1994. #205 Written by Scott Frost. Directed by Mario DiLeo.

A Lurker named Amis (Dwight Schultz) starts ranting that the evil creature who killed his buddies and fed off of him during the war is coming to kill everybody. A pre-jump gate ship homes in on the station and they revive Mariah Cirrus (Anne-Marie Johnson) who's been in stasis for over 100 years. They discover her husband was murdered by an invisible creature who boarded the ship and changed its course for Z'ha'dum, a long dead world out on the Rim. Now it's loose on the station. A drawing in G'Kar's Book of G'Quan looks just like it. When people start to die, Garibaldi convinces Amis to help them hunt down the creature.

"There have only been a couple of cases where things didn't work out," noted Joe Straczynski of Foundation Imaging's CGI work. "One was the ending of 'The Long Dark,' the revelation of the creature that tagged along on the ship. It was supposed to have been a hell of a lot more impressive than it was. But it wasn't Ron [Thornton's] fault; it was somebody else. Rarely am I actually surprised in the sense that a shot has been delivered and there's something put in there. They say, 'We want to do this in here, a small thing.' And we find a way to do it. But they know better than to spring it on me out of nowhere and then say, 'We're putting it in the episode now.' 'No, no, no, you will tell me ahead of time!' Very rarely that I have much of a problem with what they do. They're just so good over there."



STAR TREK's Dwight Schultz as a Lurker named Amis, ranting to Garibaldi of the evil creature who killed and fed off his buddies in "The Long Dark."

"I trust in individuals, not organizations."

—Sheridan

A SPIDER IN THE WEB

★★ 1/2

12/7/1994. #206 Written by Larry DiTillio. Directed by Kevin Cremin.

Talia is monitoring talks between her old friend Taro Isogi (James Shigeta) of Future Corp and Amanda Carter (Adrienne Barbeau) of Mars Colony. Senator Voudreau (Jessica Walter) tells Sheridan that EarthForce thinks Isogi is conspiring with Mars Colony against Earth and wants him to check it out. When Isogi is killed by Abel Horn (Michael Beck) who says "Free Mars!" Talia scans him but there is nothing in his mind except a ship blowing up. Horn died in a space combat but Psi Corps used him as a subject in an experimental project called "Lazarus." Horn seeks out his old lover, Amanda Carter, then knocks her out after she calls Talia. Garibaldi tracks Horn to Carter's room but he has Talia as a hostage. Sheridan tries



Christian has trouble maintaining a somber mood during filming of "Sleeping in Light," the series penultimate show, with (l to r) Jeff Conaway, Mira Furlan, Stephen Furst, Richard Biggs and Jerry Doyle.

do high-quality movies and only work two or three times a year! But the way I figured it was that if BABYLON 5 ran for five years, I would be 32 at the end of it and still have my feature film career ahead of me. I could go back to it. And I still believe that I can have a fine film career once BABYLON 5 goes away."

Christian admitted that BABYLON 5 hasn't really been much of a stepping stone to a movie career, but has absolutely no regrets about her decision to join the show. "It's been one of the most enjoyable jobs of my career," she explained. "It hasn't made me receive more attention from the film community; I haven't had offers pouring in. But it's a nice steady job, the people are wonderful and I enjoy my work—and that's what's important to me. It's given me a thread of stability in a very unstable business."

Looking on the bright side, Christian isn't afraid of being typecast, "because, frankly, nobody in the film industry watches BABYLON 5! They don't know what I've been doing."

Despite her enthusiasm for a rewarding film career, however, it isn't the sum total of Christian's long-term hopes and dreams. "Ultimately, it would be nice to be successful enough to be able to do something good for other people," she said. "I like working with children and old people. I think that if you could have a good career in the arts that made me financially independent, then I could go do something

"I haven't had offers pouring in. But it's a nice, steady job and the people are wonderful. It's given me the stability in a very unstable business."

—Actress Claudia Christian—

good for other people. For instance, I would love to make documentaries on certain issues that I think need to be addressed right now."

Christian dismissed the claim that BABYLON 5 will, like STAR TREK before it, be most appreciated after its cancellation. "I think we're being appreciated now," she stated. "I think we already have a much stronger following than

the original STAR TREK when it came out. So I think we're already beyond that point."

With four years of BABYLON 5 to her credit, Christian lost little of her enthusiasm for the show, making it a shame she couldn't come to contract terms for the series' final fifth year. "Working on BABYLON 5 has been wonderful," she stated. "The cast and crew are really the most incredible people I've worked with; my fellow castmembers are giving and generous, and it's a joy to be around them. Being involved with something that people have such a strong and positive reaction to has been a wonderful experience. And playing a strong female character has been great, as opposed to playing some of the roles that are written for women!"

"I was happy to be a part of BABYLON 5 and I certainly wouldn't mind if people remembered me from the show a long time after it's finished. I hope it will be part of something people remember me for but not the whole thing; there's more to me than Susan Ivanova!" □

to reason with him but after letting Talia go, Garibaldi kills him. Sheridan tells Garibaldi there have been rumors of a rogue operation deep inside Earth Gov called Bureau 13 which he thinks was responsible.

"This was my first script in the second season," said Larry DiTillio. "The premise was that someone commits a murder and Talia sees something in the murderer's mind, but doesn't understand what it is. But it's a clue to the murder. That was all I was given as a premise. I started to think about the problem of what could she have seen in his mind that would be so strange that she didn't understand it. And I thought to myself, 'suppose she looks in his mind and finds out that he's dead?' That's really where the whole story came from. That would interest her and she would understand it, and that's what she sees. Of course, I had to come up with a reason why she sees that he's dead. And I came up with the whole Lazarus Project."



Adrienne Barbeau as Amanda Carter of Mars Colony, monitored by Psi Corps for conspiring against Earth in "A Spider In the Web."

Fans like the secret Bureau 13 and lament their secrets weren't followed up in later episodes. "I wanted to add something within Earth Alliance that was actually against what the Psi Corp was doing, despite the fact that you see a Psi Cop as the head of Bureau 13," explained DiTillio. "Most people thought it was a Psi Corp division, but it isn't. There are certain rogue members of Psi Corp in it. What happened was that Bureau 13 happened to be the name of a role-playing game. I went looking for a name, and Bureau 13 popped into my head. I used it, and some Internet yo-yo went to them and said 'B5 is ripping you guys off.' And someone from the company called me, and said, 'You are ripping us off.' And I said 'If I am, it's unconscious. I didn't mean to.' So we weren't able to use the name again, so Bureau 13 just went away and disappeared. I had plans to bring Bureau 13 back as 'Omega Bureau' or something or other. I was going to destroy their San Diego headquarters. What I wanted was a force on Earth saying 'Psi Corp is wrong, and we were going to work against them,' and were a dirty tricks squad. They were also responsible for Knight One and Knight Two in 'A Sky Full of Stars' in my mind. And several other of the incidents in the first season were Bureau 13 incidents. Or could've been. When we were no longer able to use the name, it became a moot point."

"Whatever you may think of me, Doctor, I have some principles that even 20 years with Londo can't erase."

—Timov

SOUL MATES

★★★

12/14/1994, #208 Written by Petter David. Directed by John C. Flinn, III.

The Emperor has given Londo permission to divorce two of his three wives so he sends for all



Londo's wives, Daggair (Lois Nettleton), acid-tongued Timov (Jane Carr) and Mariel (Blair Valk), face divorce proceedings in "Soul Mates."

of them to decide which one to keep. Timov (Jane Carr), his first wife steals the show snagging all the nastiest put downs against Daggair (Lois Nettleton), Mariel (Blair Valk), Londo, Vir and anybody else within earshot of her venomous tongue. When Londo is poisoned Timov reluctantly gives a blood transfusion on the condition the Doctor keeps it secret, and in the end, Londo chooses Timov as his single wife. Talia's ex-husband, Matthew Stoner (Keith Szarabjka) claims he's free of Psi Corps because an experiment wiped out his telepathic powers. He says he loves her and offers to do the same for her, but when Garibaldi suspects he's lying about his powers, Talia helps set a trap. The truth is an experiment turned him into a high powered empath and the Corps wanted Talia to breed more of them.

Peter David's initial foray into the B5 universe was actually rejected. "What happened was the outline was done on assignment," Straczynski said. "He turned in the outline and, as I recall, it just wasn't what it kind of had to be and then he went away and on his own did the script and sent it in. And he said, 'Look, if you want it, you can buy it, if you don't, you don't have to. You're not obligated to this.' I read it and he had listened to the reasons why I had problems with the outline and turned right around and did a great script."

Noted Larry DiTillio, "It has Peter's puckish, wry humor in it."

Trivia: The original episode title was "Pestilence, Famine and Death."

"You'll destroy them inch by inch as a lesson to the others."

—Talia to Bester about the rogue telepaths

A RACE THROUGH DARK PLACES

★★★

1/25/1995, #207 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Jim Johnston.

Bester asks Talia to help him find and shut down an underground railroad for unregistered and

Shadow ships destroy the Narn outpost in Quadrant 14, Londo's plan to incite a war to grab Centauri power in "The Coming of Shadows."



runaway telepaths he suspects is on B5. The leader of the telepaths (Apesanahkwat), is the lurker who gave Garibaldi a tip in "Chrysalis." Talia finds out her 'gift' from Ironheart in "Mind War" was more than telekinesis but the ability to block out a P-12 level Psi Cop. She and the others trick Bester into thinking they are all dead. Dr. Franklin is running the "railroad" on the station but had been involved before he came to B5. Sheridan and Ivanova refuse to begin paying rent for their "command-size" quarters and get locked out. After an almost sleepless night camped in his office, Sheridan pays the rent out of station funds. Delenn asks Sheridan to dinner to learn more about being human, but she wears a traffic-stopping human style dress providing a romantic feel to the "date."

The second telepath standing with Bester during an attempted probe of a rogue telepath's mind in the teaser is Walter Koenig's wife, Judy Levitt. "I didn't know how do we maintain this character on the show without killing him off after having done something so horrendous?" said Koenig. "I was curious how Joe would bring the character back, knowing Bester has committed a rather heinous act."



Andrea Thompson as Psi Corps telepath Talia Winters, glove-less in communion with runaway telepaths in "A Race Through Dark Places."

We begin to see a softer relationship developing between Delenn and Sheridan when they have a "date" in the restaurant. "I complained to Joe about Sheridan and Delenn," said Boxleitner. "I say, 'Y'know, you're great with this intergalactic writing and all this prophesizing but this boy/girl stuff is lacking. It's so adolescent.' And he told me something. He said 'Wait a second. You're talking as an Earth male in contemporary times, that's where you're coming from. It may sound naive and innocent to you, but they aren't that. These people are 300 years ahead now in a different atmosphere. And who is to say that the Minbari are as sexually sophisticated as a 20th-century human being?' He says they are different and very naive and very childlike in their sexual sophistication."

"I think none of the Earthers on Babylon 5 have had a successful love-life. Ivanova and Sheridan share very much this same kind of thing, they weren't successful in their private lives with relationships and things. They always ended in disappointment or tragedy, so they kind of threw everything into duty and serving Earthforce."

"How will this end?"

"In Fire."

—The Centauri Emperor and Ambassador Kosh

THE COMING OF SHADOWS

★★★

2/1/1995, #209 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Janet Greek.

The Centauri Emperor (Turhan Bey) arrives aboard B5 for a tour. Londo asks Morden's (Ed Wasser) friends to destroy the Narn outpost in Quadrant 14 to start a war with the Narn and grab

SEASON ONE

Behind-the-scenes of the series' tumultuous shakedown cruise, surviving against all odds.

By Frank Garcia
and Nancy Garcia

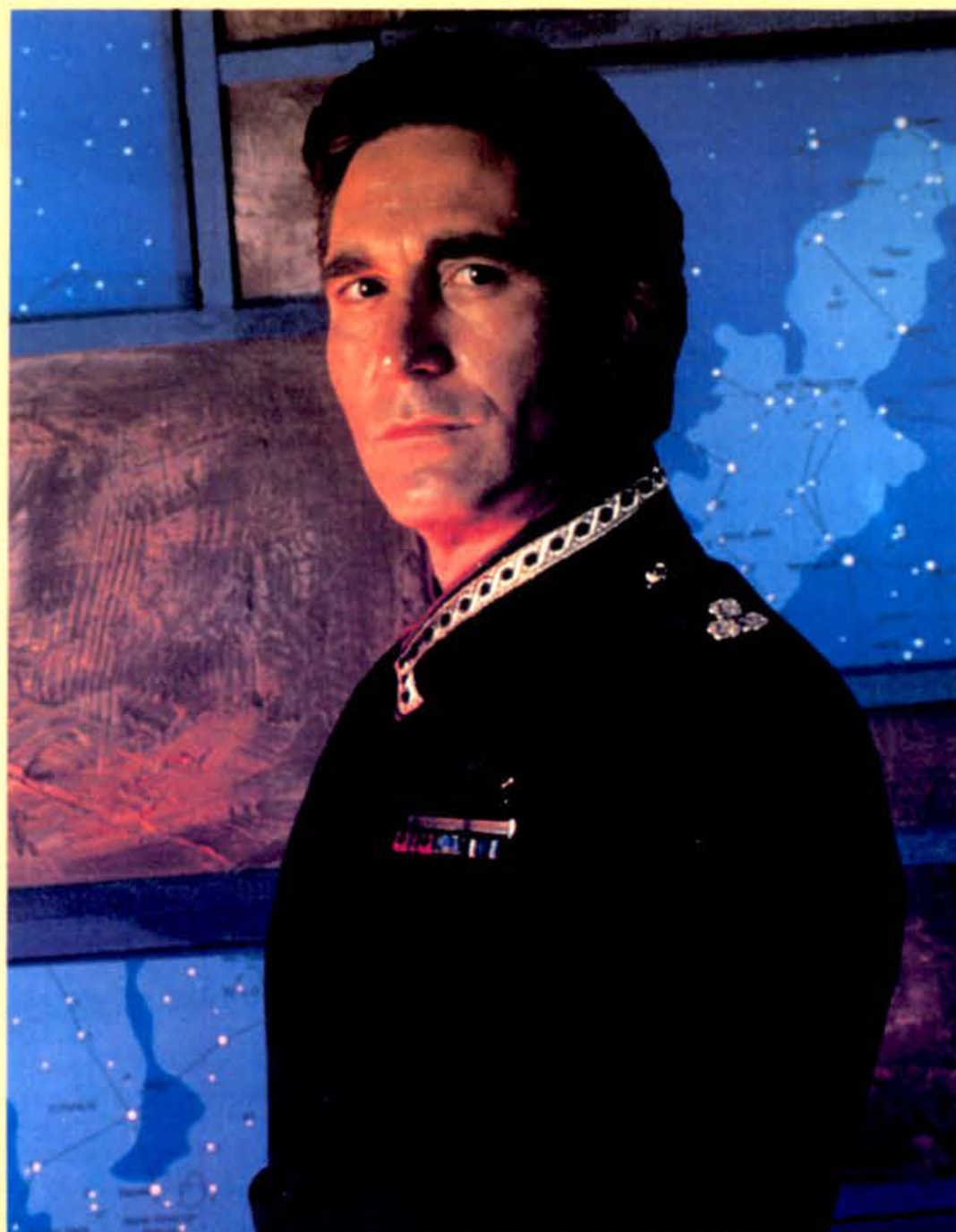
In the beginning of any novel, the author's first task is to acclimate his reader to the setting, introduce the myriads of characters inhabiting the story's universe and set up plots and conflicts propelling the story forward.

Creating a five-mile long, rotating space station hanging in deep space was a mighty setting. The characters were more diverse than an ordinary television series: humans from Earth were in charge of administrating the station while countless extraterrestrial aliens from across the galaxy walked in the hallways amongst each other.

The plots of early installments were initially episodic in nature, serving as a canvas for viewers to "get to know" the inhabitants of B5 and to learn what's going on in the universe.

Unbeknownst to the audience, a grander picture was cleverly hidden behind the canvas by executive producer and series author J. Michael Straczynski. This picture slowly came to light as the series progressed. Because Straczynski had plotted out the entire five years beforehand, this allowed for the rare use of a novelistic technique on a TV series. Diligent viewers could rewatch episodes and catch lines of dialogue, a word or a phrase, and see how it gained greater significance in future episodes. Without planning, this is not possible.

The planted seeds for future story arcs was right there, on the very first episode, "Midnight on the Firing Line." A recurring dream that haunted Londo Mollari, a dream of his death 20 years down the road, being



New York stage actor Michael O'Hare as B5 Commander Jeffrey Sinclair. "This is a large palette to paint," said O'Hare, "a scope of BEN-HUR proportions."

strangled at the hands of G'Kar. This approach gave the series unparalleled episodic continuity. "I think it was like another little pilot all over again, because there were new characters added and it just required a lot of rethinking about things that we didn't like in the pilot we thought should be changed for the good of the run of the show," said director Richard Compton. These adjustments, he says were mostly related to characters. "And I think also that [the producers] decided early on that they should shift a lot of the burden of the show away from

Michael [O'Hare], and they were doing that little by little as it went along and I think it started right in the very beginning. There was a big question after the pilot whether they should re-cast right away."

BABYLON 5 presented multi-threaded stories and characters, similar to the HILL STREET BLUES/ST. ELSEWHERE style. Usually drama has an "A" and "B" plot to sustain an hour, but B5 often threaded three or four plots during the course of a show. "When you have an ensemble cast, you can't write for everybody every week and make the stories work," noted Compton. Frequently, it's necessary to "spotlight" certain characters only. "You can't just plug them in to get them in." However, spotlights also served to enrich individual characters.

"One of the things I liked about BABYLON 5 is that it had a larger arc in almost every episode," recalled Michael O'Hare. "There's an epic journey there. This is a large palette to paint. This is the first time I've seen something like this. You're talking about a scope of BEN-HUR proportions on television. This is a hundred and some odd episode mini-series."

O'Hare said that he was surprised how easily he adapted to the specific requirements that a SF show demanded, such as acting with extraterrestrial aliens and staring out into a blue screen so that other elements could later be inserted. "I've had many acting challenges that are not science fiction that have the same type of demands," O'Hare said. "Getting used to working opposite people who are supposed to be aliens, that I found very easy. I re-



Peter Jurasik as tragic Centauri Ambassador Londo Mollari whose 110 episode-long story arc was set in the very first episode "Midnight On the Firing Line," as Londo dreams of his death at the hands of G'Kar.

member after the pilot, or during the pilot I walked away from G'Kar after a very intense scene with this guy. I walked away and I said to myself, 'My God, I've just had a serious conversation with a man dressed as a lizard!' I'm irreverent in saying lizard, but I think that he's just tremendous in it."

The earliest episodes also introduced the station's inhabitants and those who arrived for business. Individuals who passed through the station and affected the lives of our main characters included a "Soul Hunter" who captured souls at the moment

of their deaths, a Centauri dancer who attempted to steal important files from Londo ("Born to the Purple,") an archaeologist who brought unknown artifacts to Dr. Stephen Franklin (Richard Biggs) and accidentally created a monster ("Infection.")

Notably, in "Mind War" a recurring nemesis made his first appearance. While in pursuit of a telepathic renegade, Alfred Bester (Walter Koenig), an officer from Psi-Corps, the telepath law enforcement agency, was fiercely determined to catch his quarry.

Snatching the Bester role turned out to be

power when the Emperor dies. G'Kar plans an assassination of the Emperor but feels cheated when the man collapses. In Medlab, the Emperor tells Dr. Franklin his reasons for coming to B5: to prevent war by formally apologizing to the Narn and to see a Vorlon. The doctor relays his message to G'Kar. Londo lies about the Emperor's last words saying he backed them, but Londo turns down the offer of being Emperor because his latest dream shows G'Kar killing him as Emperor. Lord Refa (William Forward) has the Centauri Prime Minister killed so that the Emperor's nephew, whom they control, will ascend the throne.

Adam "Mojo" Lebowitz noted sometimes a request for space battles can be oblique. "In 'Coming Of Shadows' we had three or four descriptions about what should happen, and even one of the lines was 'A Ron Thornton or Foundation Imaging Special. Complete chaos,'" he said. "And so our job is to say, 'Well if they want complete chaos, we're going to give it to them.' Because we're fans and want to make a good show. Often, even if there may be only five shots in the script, we'll say for this to work, we're going to need another two or three. Without that it's not going to work properly. Or this is described as one shot, but for it to be exciting we need it to cut between three shots. It's crazy but instead of doing just what we're asked, we'll stick in more. Even when we're under the gun. We'll say, 'No this has to be two shots or it's not going to work.' And we take it upon ourselves to add some shots. They haven't complained."

Jeffrey Willerth, Bruce Boxleitner's stand-in, debuts as Ambassador Kosh, taking over from one of the Optic Nerve makeup specialists. "If I didn't ever get a chance to do it again, I knew that I would be able to go down in the B5 history books and say, 'He he! I got to play Kosh!' I had no idea that the character would go on and on...and die!"

Having previously directed Andreas Katsulas in MAX HEADROOM, Janet Greek observed, "Andreas is a really powerful actor, he's really fabulous. In person he has a really unusual look and so he's probably never going to be a leading man. He's got the heart of a leading man and he's an incredible actor with a lot of passion and warmth. It's really interesting to use that in a villain and he plays a really tortured person really well."

"We are all slaves to our history. If we are to have a bright future we must break those chains."

—Delenn to Garibaldi

GROPOS

★★★ 1/2

2/8/1995. #210 Written by Larry DiTillio. Directed by Jim Johnston.

The station is overcrowded by 25,000 troops nicknamed "ground pounders" on leave. Dr. Franklin's father, General Richard Franklin (Paul Winfield), stops by the station for strategic advice

Garibaldi's new love interest, Dodger (Marie Marshall), is one of the GroundPounder troopers to die during the assault of Akdor in "GROPOS".



from Sheridan on the way to a perilous mission and brings new weapons to beef up the station's defenses. While there, the doctor resolves his personal problems with his father, Garibaldi turns down a one-night-stand with Dodger (Marie Marshall), a female soldier, because for once he wants to go slow with a relationship, and Lt. Keffer makes friends with the two soldiers bunking with him. Later, a news broadcast shows that the cost of winning the battle was very high, every one of the GROPOS we have gotten to know is a casualty.

"GROPOS is probably my most controversial script," noted DiTillio. People either hate it or they love it. A lot of people didn't get the idea. A lot of people say, 'I can't believe you killed all those people.' And that was the point. That's what we do with soldiers, we throw them into hoppers and they die.

"I always wanted to do a huge John Wayne-type bar fight. We had great brawl, and if only the wheel had blown up right, we'd been all right. It was suppose to be this big shot, when the big roulette wheel comes down and blows up, but it didn't quite work. It took three hours to set up and then it just fizzled. We ended it some other way. I just wanted to show B5 in complete chaos.

"The highest praise I had ever gotten was from our marine consultant who was playing Gen. Franklin's aide. He asked me, 'What outfit were you in.' And I told him that I was never in one, and he said, 'You have to have been a marine. You got it exactly right.' And I thanked him, that was high praise for me."

Trivia: James Earl Jones was the first choice as Dr. Franklin's father but he was too expensive.



Bruce Boxleitner as Sheridan, on the losing end of a battle with a six foot Narn prisoner played by Marshall Teague in "All Alone In The Night."

"Very soon now I will be going into darkness and fire. I do not know if I am fated to walk out again. If it is your choice to come with me, then I could not wish for a better, or braver, companion."

—Delenn to Lennier

ALL ALONE IN THE NIGHT

★★ 1/2

2/15/1995. #211 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Mario DiLeo.

Sheridan is captured, held captive and tortured on an unknown alien ship. While there, Kosh sends him a telepathic message that Sheridan is 'the Hand.' The Grey Council calls Delenn to Minbar to officially strip away her membership in the Council because of her transformation. She learns that she has been replaced by a member of the Warrior Caste thus tilting the balance of power since now they have four members instead of the traditional three for each caste: Worker, Religious and Warrior.

"In 'All Alone in the Night' I got to fight a six-foot Narn, and he beat the crap out of me!" said Bruce Boxleitner. "And I love that. The hero doesn't always win here. I don't do my own stunts, because I did too much of it when I was



Singer-songwriter Paul Williams in makeup as the aide to the Lumati ambassador who insists on having sex with Ivanova in "Acts of Sacrifice."

younger. I've one bad knee. I've separated both of my shoulders. In TRON, I separated my left shoulder. Two years ago in Hawaii while boogie-boarding, I piled into the beach by a huge wave and broke my right shoulder. I get the occasional fisticuffs on the station, but that's it."

"G'Kar, everyone knows the first casualty of war is always the truth."

—Sheridan

ACTS OF SACRIFICE

★★ 1/2

2/22/1995. #212 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Jim Johnston.

G'Kar struggles to prevent the Narns on the station from beginning open warfare with the Centauri, in hopes that Earth or Minbar will take the Narn side in the war. He risks his life fighting one of the younger Narns for control but in the end Earth and Minbar stay neutral and Sheridan and Delenn can only offer unofficial, secret aid to Narn refugees. Ivanova must find a diplomatic way to handle the alien Lumati, whose planet has decided to join the League of Non-Aligned Worlds but the ambassador, Correlilmerzon (Ian Abercrombie), insists on having sex with her to seal the deal.

The infamous Ivanova "sex dance" was, said director Jim Johnston, an idea inspired by Claudia Christian who wanted something funny to do. "We came up with that together because Claudia said, 'What the hell are we going to do about this?' So we spent a couple of hours one afternoon deciding just how we could do this, because we said it can't be like real sex. I said, 'What we have to do is to really make fun of it and bewilder this guy,' so together we came up with this little dance and little chant, and we sort of improvised it as we went along. We did about three or four takes because she kept breaking up. Paul [Williams, the singer/songwriter who played the ambassador's assistant] was delightful and, of course, he helped because he was actually breaking up too. That was actually a pretty funny episode."

In self defense, Sheridan kills a Minbari attacker who steals his link, only to find himself accused of murdering the alien, in "There All Honor Lies."



"Maybe somebody should've labeled the future: some assembly required."

—Garibaldi to Franklin

HUNTER, PREY

★★ 1/2

3/1/1995. #213 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Menachem Binetski.

President Santiago's personal physician, Dr. Everett Jacobs (Tony Steedman) comes to the station looking for a means to escape from Special Intelligence agent Derek Cranston (Bernie Casey). He's carrying with him a data crystal with sensitive government information. He fled Earth with information which points to the new president as having prior knowledge that Santiago's ship would blow up. Events become complicated when a lurker named Max (Richard Moll) captures the fugitive, and tries to get a ransom but Garibaldi and Dr. Franklin rescue him and the crystal and their task is to smuggle the good doctor off the station without Agent Cranston's knowledge. To elude the enemy, Sheridan asks Kosh to hide the fugitive on the Vorlon ship.



A pseudopod emerges on the Vorlon ship in which Kosh harbors President Santiago's personal physician on the run, in "Hunter, Prey."

One of the unanswered questions in the B5 tapestry is that although President Clark was corrupt and influenced by the Shadows, how was he able to accomplish his tasks so easily? Were the people surrounding him so pliable? Where are the honest people? Larry DiTillio provided some answers. "What Joe's saying is 'Let's find the good people. There's a few of them and you see them.' Everyone else is basically listening to Clark. There's also a lot of Shadow influence in the Earth government at the time as well as Psi Corps. In World War II, not everyone agreed with the Nazi party. But the Nazi had the power and if you didn't agree with them, like the doctor, you'd likely be killed for your beliefs."

"What that episode showed is for honest people to be effective in that kind of situation, they have to act dishonestly. They have to form conspiracies to do the right thing. If they tried to do it through normal channels, you're going to get stepped on. Sheridan and his Conspiracy of Light really is a conspiracy. But it's a conspiracy of good people."

"Welcome to Babylon 5, the last best hope for a quick buck."

"Commander."

"But it's just demeaning. We're not just some...deep space franchise. This station is about something."

—Ivanova and Sheridan

THERE ALL THE HONOR LIES

★★ 1/2

4/26/1995. #215 Written by Peter David. Directed by Michael Vejar.

When a Minbari steals Sheridan's link, and

a better deal than Walter Koenig had ever expected. He was originally offered the role of "Knight One" in "And the Sky Full of Stars," but a heart attack sidelined him. Straczynski generously offered Koenig a chance to play Bester at any time that was convenient for him and would adjust the schedules to make it possible. "It was one of those serendipitous occasions, even though the circumstances, initially, were rather dark and ominous," recalled Koenig. "There was a silver lining in this cloud. It was an opportunity to do a role that recurred on a more frequent basis than I think the original character would have in 'And the Sky Full of Stars.' I don't think that character would have had the life that Bester had, particularly because he wasn't part of the telepaths. And telepaths became such a popular element in the B5 universe."

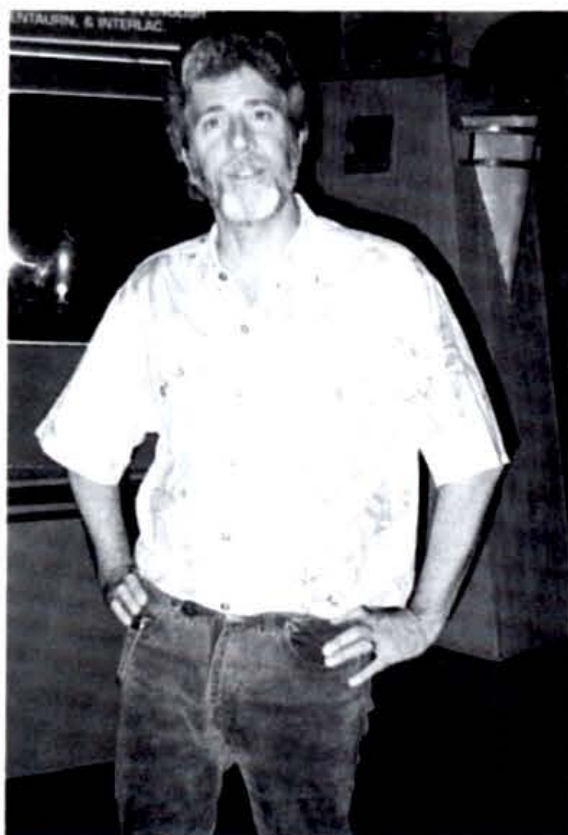
The Psi-Cop Bester appeared in 12 episodes throughout the life of the series. For Koenig, this was a chance to push aside a well-known Russian in a different SF universe and create something new. "The thing that was so appealing about BABYLON 5 was the growth in characters and situations," said Koenig. "There's always transitions and transformations going on. People changed. Circumstances changed. They didn't go on a straight line. They veered left and right and different directions. The storylines were not predictable. I know it's fascinating for the audience, who loved the idea of sitting back and guessing where the stories were going to go and what's going to happen to a character."

An important incident in Sinclair's life occurred during the events of "And the Sky Full of Stars" when two men, Knight One (Christopher Neame) and Two (Judson Scott), smuggled aboard the station a "cerebral matrix" (a "virtual-reality cybernet") and kidnapped Sinclair and put him under the matrix in order to discover the truth behind the Battle of the Line. Directed by Janet Greek in her first of many episodes for the series, "Sky" presented us with powerful surreal sequences depicting Sinclair's memories on that fateful day 10 years ago.

"It was really an interesting episode be-

“The thing that was so appealing about B5 was the growth in characters and situations. Circumstances changed. The storylines were not predictable.”

—Actor, Walter Koenig—



Producer John Copeland on the set, pitched by Straczynski on B5 after their kid show CAPTAIN POWER got the axe.

cause there was a lot of conversation about how to depict Sinclair's mind," said Janet Greek. "I wanted to do it with real stark lighting, I wanted everything to fall off in the black and just spotlight the actors so that it was very harsh and strange. I wanted to do it almost like a dance. I put a crane in the Zocolo. Nobody thought that the crane was even going to fit. I remember I had to fight for that crane. They thought I was nuts! Here I was coming into this new show, I said, 'I want a crane,' and they're laughing. They thought it was a joke. I gave up a lot of other things in order to get that crane."

"I really wanted to emphasize how alone Sinclair was. I broke all the rules because it was in somebody's mind. There was no reality. The Knight popped up in different places. There were no rules of movement, no rules of anything."

"It was very difficult because Michael O'Hare was just learning a lot

about his character. I gave him a lot of detailed direction to help him. He was basically acting in a vacuum, but I think he did a really good job with it. We were all really excited about what finally happened. The final result was really powerful and I wish they had done more of those kinds of things."

Michael O'Hare recalled his BABYLON 5 experience as an exciting exercise in putting out fires. "The most common thing said to me was, 'Commander, we have a problem!' So I was often in a problem solving crisis management mode and the destiny of the station lay on my shoulders," said O'Hare. "It was my responsibility as an actor, I felt, to bring out the reality of the situation, because it's a fantasy television show after all. To try to bring as much reality to what it would be like to be in that situation in space. If you made any enormous mistake and some gaping hole is blown in the hull, in spite of the modern technology some 250 years from now, everybody would be dead. I tried to bring that kind of reality to it."

Minbari secrets and the Jeffrey Sinclair story were character elements that were heavily played up during the first season, however because of unexpected changes beginning in the second season with the in-

he's shot, the Captain is accused of murdering the alien. Both Garibaldi and Delenn conduct investigations into the incident. Sheridan claims self-defense and meets with a Minbari witness, Ashan (Sean Gregory Sullivan), for interrogation. Guinevere Corey (Julie Caitlin Brown) arrives as the Captain's lawyer. Kosh insists that Sheridan continue their "lessons" together. He takes Sheridan to a deep, unused area where there is "one moment of perfect beauty." The truth emerges when Lennier coaxes a confession from Ashan that the Captain was being framed for his actions during the Earth/Minbari war, for having destroyed the Minbari cruiser, the Black Star.

"I just love John Iacovelli's whole scenic design there. He did so much with so little," said Bruce Boxleitner, referring to the moment in this episode, where Kosh delivered another one of his cryptic "lessons" that would teach him how to fight legends. "I thought that was very inventive, creating that set and everything. It was very simplistically done."

If anyone's confused and wondered, 'Just what were these mysterious lessons?' Jeffrey Willerth explained. "I think they were more than history lessons. Sheridan needed to understand what he was about to encounter in the impending war. I also would like to think those lessons were unconscious lessons. They were not lessons he was supposed to be cognizant of; that he understood or knew. What was really going on there was pieces of Kosh that were going to live inside of Sheridan. And we saw that in 'Falling Toward Apotheosis,' when Kosh reveals itself and comes out to wrestle with the other Kosh."

"We think of it as lessons but actually it's pieces of Kosh that was actually being transferred into Sheridan's body."

"The Psi Corps is your friend. Trust the Corps."

—Subliminal text during Psi-Corps commercial

"Narns declared war first!"

—Londo

AND NOW FOR A WORD

★★★

5/3/1995. #214 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Mario DiLeo.

An Earth television crew spends 36 hours on Babylon 5 just as the Narn officially declare war on the Centauri. As reporter Cynthia Torqueman (Kim Zimmer) films her approach to the station, a Narn ship destroys a Centauri transport which they claim was secretly carrying weapons of mass destruction. A Centauri cruiser appears followed by a Narn Cruiser and while Sheridan tries to get at the truth and keep war from breaking out, the two ships destroy each other in front of the TV cameras. Torqueman interviews various officials on the station and a few on Earth and we get to see a Psi-Corps TV commercial.

"I have to say that's probably my least favorite episode," said Larry DiTillio. "It was

Delenn breaks down during an interview for ISN TV news after war breaks out between the Narn and the Centauri in "And Now For A Word."



an experiment of different styles and tone. The experiment was just not completely successful. It didn't maintain the tone. It seemed like a very contrived episode because now the camera crew was there. I felt Sheridan seemed a little naive. I thought, 'Geez, these people are not going to say good things about you and you really should know about that given what's going on.' He kind of accepts that they would do a balanced report. I thought he accepted that a little too fast. I would have been leery of the media because the media is controlled by Earth and EarthGov. But if he was leery, then you couldn't have the episode. He had to let them come onboard the station and film. A lot of it bothered me."

Referring to the fourth season episode, "Illusion of Truth," which employed a similar device, DiTillio feels the same way. "They're being awfully trusting considering what's going on. I wouldn't be this trusting to these people. I hated our characters to be stupid. Oddly enough, in GROPOS, I had a reporter character but that got edited out because of [running] time. It was the same kind of thing. This was a legitimate and decent reporter who just wanted to get the story but wasn't really thinking about what happens when you release the story with all kinds of flaws in your story."

"This is the only way. And we will tell you those answers. But be warned. Once you know his secret, once you know what we have known the last three years, you'll never sleep well again. Come, Captain, the greatest nightmare of our time is waiting for you." —Delenn to Sheridan

IN THE SHADOW OF Z'HA'DUM ★★1/2

5/10/1995. #217 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by David Eagle.

Sheridan accidentally discovers that Morden (Ed Wasser) was a crewmember aboard the science vessel *The Icarus*, in which his wife Anna also served. He arrests the man believed to be dead and interrogates him to discover what became of that ill-fated voyage to Z'ha'dum. Morden explains that he has no memory of the events that befell the *Icarus*. Vir, on behalf of the Centauri Republic, attempts to have Morden released under diplomatic immunity. Delenn and Kosh also implore upon Sheridan to release the man. Delenn and Kosh privately explain to him that Morden is an agent of the Shadows and that in order to prevent their enemy from attacking before the rest of the galaxy is ready for them, Kosh and Delenn insists that Sheridan release the man who "is never alone!" After glimpsing strange, dark figures hovering over Morden through the surveillance cameras, Sheridan lets Morden out of confinement. He extracts a promise from Kosh, "Teach me how to fight them!" But Kosh also warns, "If you go to Z'ha'dum, you will die!"

Sheridan glimpses the strange dark shapes of the Shadows around Morden on the surveillance cameras in "In the Shadow of Z'ha'dum."



roduction of a new Captain, this thread lost its potency.

Difficult moral challenges beckoned for Sinclair in "Believers." Alien parents of an ill young child refused to give Doctor Franklin permission for him to operate and save their son. Sinclair was torn between the parents' adamant wishes and Franklin's passionate desire to save the child. In the end, Franklin went ahead and performed the surgery, saving the child, but the parents were horrified at this sacrilege. In accordance with their religious beliefs, they no longer believed their son was theirs and in a ritual, they killed the child.

When the opportunity came to write this script, Straczynski handed it to his friend, veteran novelist and screenwriter David Gerrold. "I said, 'Oh, come on, Joe! Not the Christian Scientist story! Why me!'" Gerrold recalled. "Of course, I had just adopted a little boy. It was obvious why me. He said, 'Anyone else who would write it, the parents would come out as villains. Write it from the love of the parents for their kid.'"

It was always the intention of the screenwriters to have the child die at the end of the story. "That was from the very beginning," said Gerrold. "We had a long talk about it. [Series conceptual consultant] Harlan [Ellison] said, 'You know, for this story to work, you gotta break our hearts.' The only reason to do this story is to do something nobody's ever done before. 'Let's kill the kid.' I'm not sure if it was my idea, Joe's or Harlan's, it just sort of happened. 'Well, of course we're going to kill the kid!' That's a given from the beginning! What this is about, it's not about killing the kid, it's about the dilemma of people's belief systems and they're all stuck in it."

To Gerrold's surprise, the story's powerful content resonated with the participants making the show. "One of the things that struck me as remarkable was how much the crew got involved in the story. People would come up and chat with me. It awakened so much stuff from their childhoods, things that had happened that it was like a massive encounter session for a while be-

“It was remarkable how much the crew got involved in the story. People would come and chat with me. It awakened so much stuff from their childhoods.”

—Screenwriter David Gerrold—



"Soul Hunter" (Morgan W. Sheppard) attempts to kill Delenn and steal her soul in the show's second episode aired.

cause some of these people got so caught up in the story, I was a little bit startled that the story had that much impact."

Moral dilemmas of a different kind also confronted Sinclair in "By Any Means Necessary" when blue-collar workers who kept the station's Docking Bay running smoothly decided to go on strike. In a script that had been described as "a plot that STAR TREK would never have done!" Sinclair had to find a quick solution before violence erupted between the dock workers and station security, who had been ordered by Earth to resolve the situation quickly.

In a script penned by Straczynski's wife, Kathryn Drennan, "By Any Means" was a chance to go deeper into the inner workings of the station and see how the wheels turned.

"I sort of ran out of people there so I enlisted the crew," said director Jim Johnston. "I put about half the crew in a lot of those group shots."

"One of my beliefs about BABYLON 5 was that it is supposed to be a space station of a quarter of a million people, and I wanted to make it look like a quarter of a million people. I would always lobby for as many extras as possible, because I wanted a lot of people. I just think that it added to the feeling that they were in confined space with a lot of people. I always thought it added a lot of energy to the show."

Johnston was so spirited that he actually jumped into the fray himself. "About the fifth day of the shoot I realized that we were threatening to strike but we never really struck. So I called up [producer] John Copeland the night before the last big scene in the docking hall and I said, 'I need another actor because I think I've got to cross the line and make it a strike.' He said, 'Well, the budget's already in to Warners and this and that, it's another \$4,500 and I can't do it.' All that next day it was bothering me that we didn't have this guy, so finally I couldn't stand it anymore, I went into makeup and put on one of these dock workers uniforms, put as much dirt on my face as possible, grabbed a wrench and got in the middle and I'm the one who says, 'strike!' That starts the chant, 'Strike! Strike!' And



During filming first season artists from makeup supplier Optic Nerve ready G'Kar and Delenn on the set.

[the producers] never said a word to me. Never said, 'Oh, that was nice.' They just let it go. And that was nice." But please, don't tell the Screen Actors Guild..."

Looking over the six episodes he directed during this first season, Johnston noted "'Soul Hunter' was one of my favorites because it was mysterious and it had a very nice mystique to it. I gather it is one of the more popular ones."

The "big picture" loomed heavily in "Signs and Portents." Any episode that furthered the plot, or was part of the "story arc" was colloquially termed by Straczynski as a "Wham" episode.

A mysterious, yet handsome man named Morden (Ed Wasser) approached each of the alien ambassadors and asked a simple question, "What do you want?" which elicited various responses. But the one response that set off a trigger came from Ambassador Mollari, who retorted, "You really want to know what I want? You really want to know the truth? I want my people to reclaim their rightful place in the galaxy. I want to see the Centauri stretch forth their hand again and command the stars. I want a rebirth of glory, a renaissance of power!"

With this reply, Mollari unknowingly and fatefully set his future.

"We saw, initially, this man who is so indulgent and loves to drink, loves to chase the girls and loves to gamble, and yet has a bitterness underneath him," said Jurasik. "If you put yourself in that spot, as Londo, think of the parts of you that are open to temptation, open to excess. Those are, in fact, your Achilles heel. And we see that exposed. People move in on that. And of course he is tempted. And guess what? He's just not strong enough character-wise to hang in there and resist."

Being the director that first introduced Morden to the audience, Janet Greek said that initially, she wasn't sure who he was.

"I decided he was supposed to be Mordred from the King Arthur. I tried to make him somebody that looked great, but that you mistrusted immediately, but was really smooth. I didn't want him to be just some creepy old villain. I wanted him to be somebody that looked kind of slick. Someone in the image of a snake oil salesman."

Looking over the body of the first season, story editor Larry DiTillio observed, "The first season is more or less episodic. We threw the kitchen sink at everybody. Dr. Franklin did basically nothing. We have David Gerrold's story 'Believers' and one or two more that came along that featured Dr. Franklin. Richard [Biggs] is a good actor, and he was a good character [but] he really did nothing the first year. In the second year, however, he came into his own. You saw more stories on him."

"Somewhat the same as with G'Kar. The first year, he was more or less being played for comic relief or a buffoon, so did Londo. In the second year they became much more serious characters as they developed and as the situation developed."

From director Bruce Seth Green's perspective, although he admired Straczynski's dedication to defining a brand-new universe, he also sensed, "They weren't thrilled with the way the series was turning out. Joe always knew what he wanted but I don't think he was getting what he wanted. I'm not saying that's because of the directors that were chosen, although that contributed, directors were shooting the shows in a very standard way. They weren't trying to convey much in the way of style. But it was also because anything new needs a shakedown period. The characters, the actors were all finding themselves. There's a leap from the page to the screen, creatively, and perhaps the executive producers were hoping the leap would be more consistent with what their inner vision was." □

Joe keeps referring to the heroic epic from Arthur to Ulysses," said Bruce Boxleitner. "In all these heroic stories you have to follow this main guy, seeing things through their experiences. He loves to refer back to all the classic heroic myths. Joe wanted me to think of certain historical figures. He kept telling me: think of Eisenhower. Think of McArthur. In one of my favorite episodes 'The Shadow of Z'ha'dum,' I had this speech about Churchill and Coventry. But I think of the Arthurian character. Arthur brought all the tribes of Britons together and then lost it. That was the heroic tragedy that it crumbled, and then they fought to rebuild it again. And that seems to be in every myth."

"I have a destiny to fulfill. One that will take our people back to a golden age."

—Londo

KNIVES

★★ 1/2

5/17/1995. #216 Written by Larry DiTillio. Directed by Stephen Posey.

Londo's old friend and dueling partner, Urza Jaddo (Carmen Argenziano) shows up and Sheridan is possessed by an entity that is displaced in time from the rift where Babylon 4 disappeared. Londo finds that Urza is on the opposite sides of the political arena, and is forced to duel him. Urza sacrifices his life so that his family may be brought under Londo's protection. Afterwards Londo realizes he should keep more up to date on the politics at home.

"I wanted to do a sword fight, what can I tell you?" chuckled DiTillio. "I wanted to go through the fact that not every Centauri was like Londo and Refa. There were decent Centauri. That episode falls in a very key spot in the second year arc, and I wanted to show that Londo does realize that he's making a choice. He says 'The blood is on my hands. The path is clear and I can't stop it now.' Joe then takes it to bigger heights as the season goes to the end. And even refers back to 'Knives' when Londo says to Refa, 'I've already lost one friend, what more do you want.' It's my theory that up to that point, Londo really didn't realize what he was doing. Vir becomes the voice of reason, and says he can stop. But Londo says 'No I can't, because I did make the choice now. I will see where it takes me.' That I think is his incredible tragedy."



Londo cradles the body of old friend and dueling partner Urza Jaddo (Carmen Argenziano) after running him through in "Knives."

"I will see you in a place where no shadows fall."

—Delenn to Sheridan

CONFESSIONS & LAMENTATIONS ★★★

5/24/1995. #218 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Kevin Cremin.

An alien plague strikes the Markab race and is 100% contagious and fatal. Panic ensues because no one knows whether it is contagious to any other

WALTER KOENIG

STAR TREK's Chekov finds the role of his career in Bester, a malicious Psi Cop with complex shadings.

By Sue Uram

Portraying a purely evil character in television's *BABYLON 5* series should be atypical for the actor who played the affable Mr. Chekov in the original *STAR TREK*. Not so. Walter Koenig has managed to change his smiling Chekov grin into a grimace and become the sinister Psi Cop, Bester. "The whole thing about my character of Chekov is that in the 30 years I played him, what did you really learn about him?" he says. "You knew he was kind of a wise guy, spunky. What Joe Straczynski did was open this role up for me, add new elements. I then had to find a way to incorporate and justify them. My initial thinking was to play this as a sinister and arrogant guy who is an unfeeling character. I think that even the most heinous human being, with very few exceptions, was not born that way. Bester may have been predisposed but then was manipulated by events." Koenig's initial reaction to the part was to go with the "bad guy" emphasis on the character. Straczynski continued to expand the parameters of Bester so that his personality became more dimensional.

"Actually, I prefer playing this type of evil character," said Koenig. "Bester is interesting and I love the power that he has. The wonderful thing about being an actor is that it gives you license to act out those things the socialization process has taught you to inhibit. I am perfectly satisfied to live my life on the right side of the law. At the same time, I feel that mankind is vested with humanitarian genes and atavistic aggressive genes as well. Within the parameters of a character, I am allowed to express some of that aggression and it just feels good. I am not hurting anybody and I don't have to worry about my conscience afterwards. I like the idea of exploring that aspect of myself."



Koenig managed to change his smiling Chekov grin into a grimace to become the sinister Psi Cop Bester. "Actually, I prefer playing this type of evil character," said Koenig.

In order to portray Bester, Koenig said he tapped into a basic human trait. "If I talk about it genetically, I think that those characteristics are there—those aggressive feelings exist in everyone. We have been taught to suppress those feelings as a course for survival in society. One cannot be a functioning positive human being if that is allowed to go awry."

According to the comic book series based on *Babylon 5*, Bester was a lonely child who was never accepted by his peers eventually turning to the Psi Corp where he finds his niche. "To base his evil solely on

his childhood is sort of instant analysis," said Koenig. "I decided on some personal things for Bester early on in the show which I have carried through to flesh-out the character. You know realistically speaking, everyone on *Babylon 5* is about two and one half feet taller than I am. So, I am able to tap into the fact that as a kid I did feel a certain degree of inadequacy because I was short. I can then translate these feelings of inadequacy easily into anger or hostility. Although I should point out that I was angry at fate and not any certain individuals from my childhood. Whereas Walter Koenig would then turn this feeling upon himself and feel sorry for himself, Bester uses that to maintain his power. Bester gives you the impression that no matter how strong that you feel you are, he is stronger."

One of the traits that Koenig has incorporated into his portrayal of Bester is a manifestation of a physical weakness. "I use the clenched left fist as a character trait for Bester which no one seems to notice," he explained. "My left hand never opens while I am in character. If you watch the show closely, Bester does everything with his right hand although, in reality, Walter Koenig is left-handed. It is my private little cue that I use to give me the feeling of having to be all the more pugnacious and defiant. That I have a handicap and rather than feel sorry for myself, I use it to generate feelings of power."

Koenig pointed out that it is not inconsistent to let the other side of Bester shine through particularly as he is showcased in the episode "Ship Of Tears." Describing this show as "the best job in television that I have ever had," Koenig revealed that the evil Psi Cop Bester actually develops human feelings. The plot line centers around a transport ship filled with specially trained psychics in cryogenic freeze who are en route to man the alien Shadow crafts. These psychics have been surgically altered so that



Koenig's Bester and assistant Kelsey (Felicity Waterman) keep an eye on Sinclair (Michael O'Hare) as they search the station for a rogue telepath who has assumed god-like powers in first season's "Mind War."

they are compatible with the Shadow controls and can then successfully merge with the ships. Bester appears on BABYLON 5 to induce Sheridan to intercept that ship attempting to convince the crew that his motives are beneficial to them as it supposedly is said to contain weapons to be used against the space station.

"This particular episode is a real showcase not only for me, but for Bester as a character," Koenig said. "It's a surprise to learn that Bester has some humanity. Bester has a secret love, who is part of this psychic group and who is carrying his child." Bester's marriage as described in a earlier episode is explained by his mention that this liaison was arranged merely to genetically improve the breed of Psi Cops. Although Koenig described this role as not being a "huge emotional piece," he quickly added that there is an impressive amount of subtlety which gives his character more dimension.

"Ship Of Tears" is described by Koenig as a turning point for his character. "Although he does have feelings, Bester does not want to appear as if he is vulnerable because he does not want to be hurt," Koenig said. "He develops a veneer, a patina of authority, disdain and arrogance which is really not all of who he is. With Bester I have had the opportunity to explore the entire character even if I only make two guest appearances a year." In actuality, Bester appeared in just one episode the first season, one second season, and two the third season. It is not until the fourth season that the char-

“Joe Straczynski is an individual with a great heart and a deep social conscience. Somebody has to be the bad guy to make the point that good wins over evil.”

—Actor Walter Koenig—

acter is is given full reign as the leader of the mysteriously evil Psi Corp.

Fifth season saw an increased resemblance of the Psi Corp to Nazi Germany, particularly the infamous SS. "I do not think that this is necessarily a comparison to Nazi Germany," Koenig said. "It signifies an oppressive, evil force. It is a shorthand method of helping to define who the antagonists are. This type of costuming has been going on forever. In the old Westerns, the cowboys in the black hats were always the bad guys. I feel that it is an expression of that type of thing.

"Even if the Psi Corp was espousing something in a derogatory ethnic manner, I would not be offended by it. Because the overall concept of the show is one which is very humanistic and very idealistic. Joe Straczynski is an individual with a great heart and deep social conscience. Somebody has to be the bad guy, to provide the conflict and make the point that good wins out over evil. The reason I find the role attractive is because it is a challenge for me as an actor. Once I know that I am not in a piece that propagandizes an ideology that I cannot tolerate, then my concern is how well-written is the character and how challenging is it for me as an actor. That alone becomes my responsibility."

For trivia buffs, Koenig's wife, Judy Levitt, made a guest appearance in the show. Levitt was seen as the attractive red-headed Psi Cop in the episodes "A Race Through Dark Places" and "Dust To Dust."

species. The Markabs quarantine themselves into an unused area and Delenn and Lennier volunteer to minister to the sick without knowing if they can catch the disease. Dr. Franklin races to find a cure or a vaccination from scratch. He discovers the answer but not in time to save the Markabs. In the quarantined area, the two Minbaris are the only ones left alive. Reports come in that the plague has wiped out the entire Markab race. Sheridan is invited to a Minbari ritual feast and falls asleep during one of the periods of contemplation.

This episode's most emotionally churning scenes, where the Markabs die in isolation helped only by Delenn and Lennier was very affecting for the actors, said Larry DiTillio. "More so for Mira than Bill. Remember Bill was practically born on a soundstage and his perspective is basically 'this is my job for today.' Mira, however, found a lot of resonance in the script relating to her former Yugoslavian background."

Optic Nerve created many alien masks for all the extras playing Markabs who did not have any nostrils. "The alien masks had invisible slits around the nasal areas through which actors could breathe," said DiTillio.

"I actually like these big, elaborate scenes. I think they're spectacular," said John Vulich who created about 60 Markab masks. "I liked the challenge of achieving those numbers."

Historically speaking, the tale reflected the Black Death tragedy that ravaged Europe during the 14th Century. "Joe is a history buff and many plots in the B5 universe revolved around incidents similar to ones that had already occurred in human history," explained DiTillio.



Dr. Franklin and a Markab doctor race to find the cure to a plague that is wiping out the Markab race in "Confessions and Lamentations."

"You blew my cover! You're dead. Do you hear me, you're dead! The Corps is Mother, the Corps is Father. You're dead, Lyta Alexander. The corps will find you."

—Talia Winters screaming to Lyta

DIVIDED LOYALTIES

★★★ 1/2

10/11/1995. #220 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Jesus Salvador Trevino.

Lyta Alexander (Patricia Tallman), B5's former resident telepath returns to the station with a warning: one of them is a traitor. A secret Psi Corps project has been implanting false personalities into people, submerged so deeply in the subconscious that the person isn't aware and it can't be scanned. Lyta has the password that activates the false personality and wants to discover who is the traitor. The command staff, particularly Ivanova, balks at Lyta's request to scan each of them to discover who will respond to the password. Because of a problem with her cubicle, Ivanova offers Talia a place to stay for a few days. Ivanova privately reveals to Sheridan that she's a latent telepath. To find the traitor, Sheridan conducts a staff review so that Lyta can silently scan each of them. Failing to find their

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CGI EFFECTS

Foundation Imaging ushered in a new era of visual effects for TV.

*By Frank Garcia
and Robert T. Garcia*

On the strength of Joe Straczynski's presentation to Warner Brothers Television, *BABYLON 5* was made possible, and a new age in television special effects was born. Deserved credit goes to visual special effects designer Ron Thornton and his partner Paul Beigle-Bryant. It was Thornton's talent that produced the computer-generated presentation reel. Together, Thornton and Bryant formed Foundation Imaging and assembled a team of computer SFX artists who were, in 1993, armed with a large bank of 16 connected Ami-

quality and sophistication of the SFX naturally evolved and improved.

As FI's co-founder, Ron Thornton, a native Brit, began in the film business constructing props and miniatures for BBC productions like *DOCTOR WHO* and *BLAKE'S 7*. Emigrating to the United States in 1984, he continued working with miniatures for *COMMANDO* and *SPACEBALLS*. But it wasn't until 1987 when he was introduced to the Amiga computer during the production of *CAPTAIN POWER AND THE SOLDIERS OF THE FUTURE* that he came to discover and began working with computer generated images (CGI) as a means to eliminate traditional miniature work. The seminal graphics work completed for that one-season series was a direct precursor to making *BABYLON 5* a reality.

Adam "Mojo" Lebowitz was Foundation Imaging's first employee. He was hired in June 1992 as an assistant animator with Richard Payne and Mark Swain to work on "The Gathering." He continued with the series and eventually was promoted to senior animator during the second season. "We did a lot of the design work together," noted Lebowitz. "I designed the Centauri War Bird."

When FI hired him in 1993, John Teska was already a veteran SFX artist in Hollywood, working on such films as *DEMOLITION MAN* and *TREMORS*. But he was using traditional methods to create those effects. While working on those films by day, he taught himself Lightwave 3D at night. *BABYLON 5* was Teska's introduction to the world of CGI effects. "My background has been with creature effects, so I tend to grab that up," said Teska. "Mojo is just the ace with space battles so when a space battle came along generally that would head in his direction."

"When we first started on the pilot, we gained Straczynski's trust," said Ron Thornton. "We said, 'Look we're not going to screw you up. We're going to give more than you can possibly expect for what you're paying for, but trust us!'"

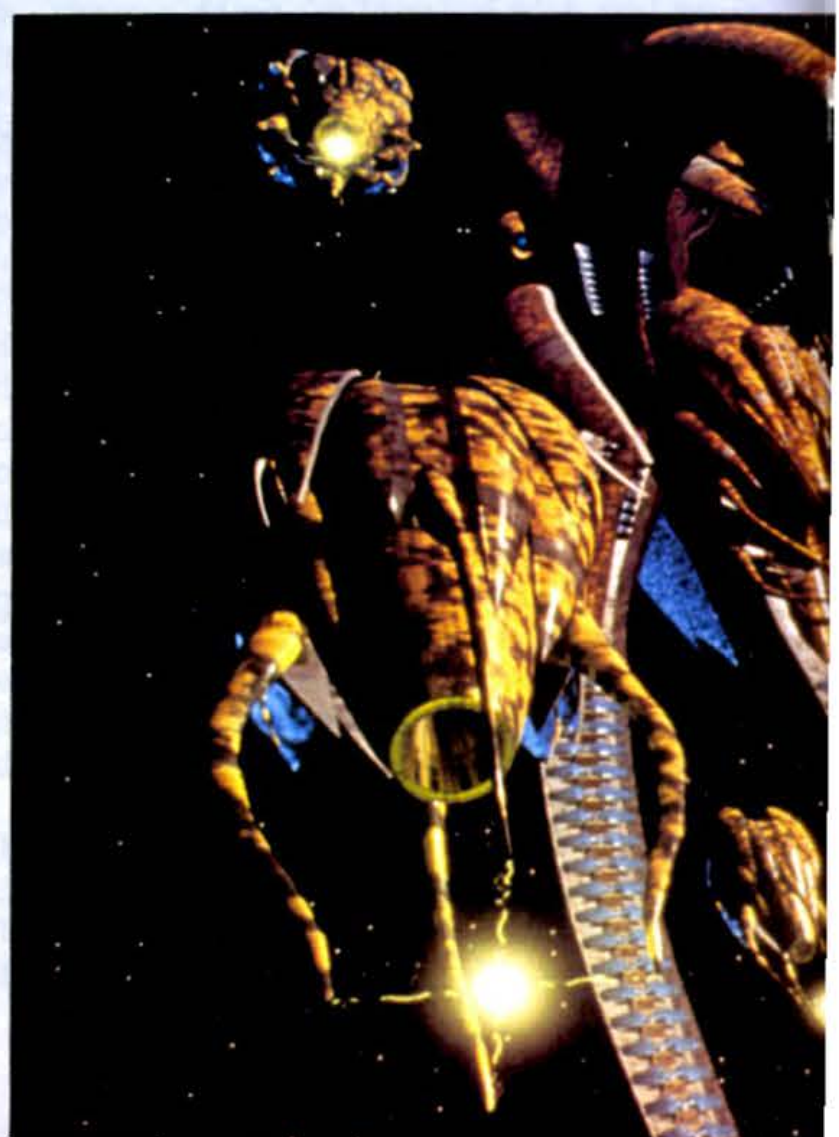
"What we've done is avoided some of these shows' pitfalls where effects teams

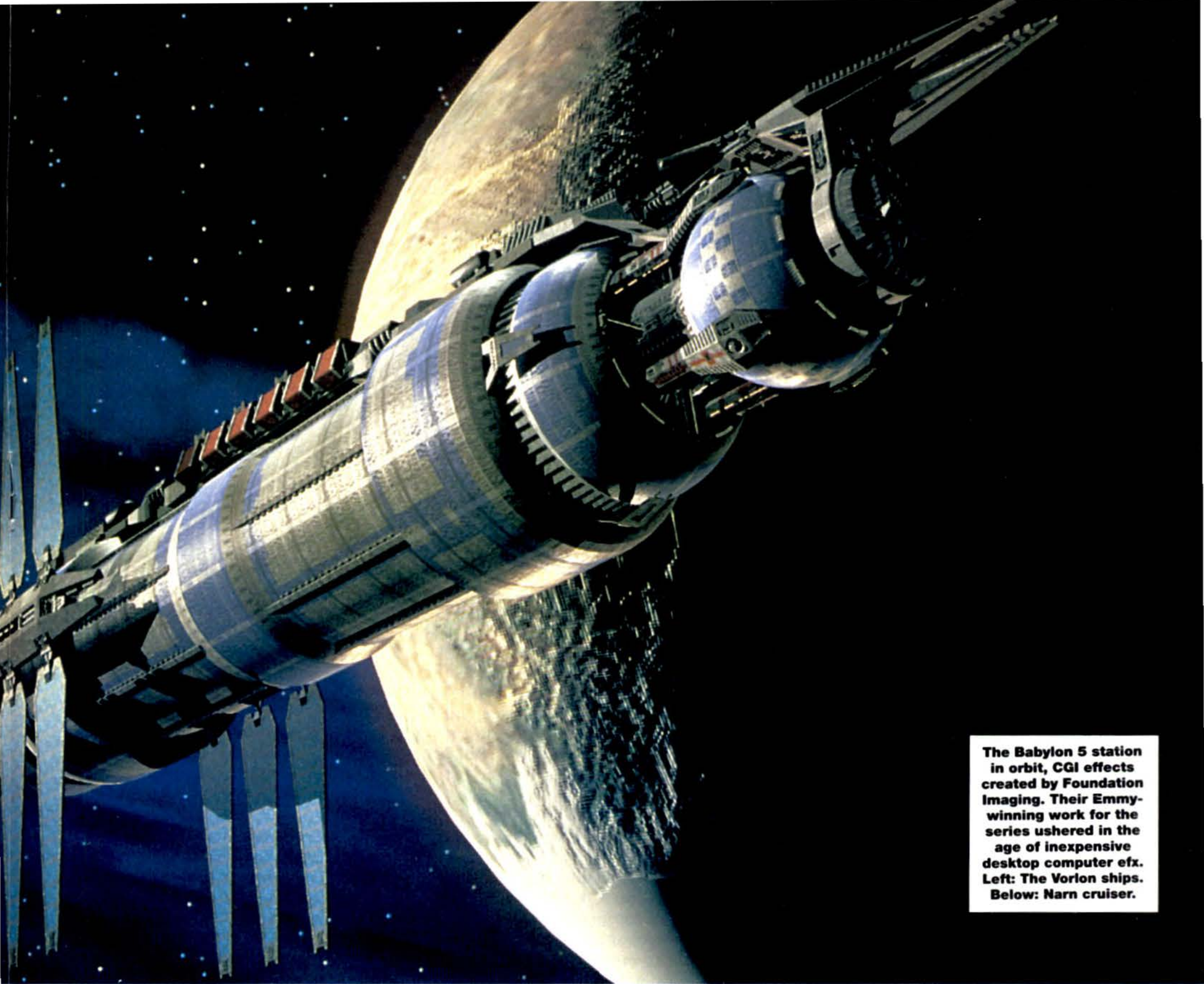


Foundation Imaging co-founder Ron Thornton, the man behind the effects demo reel that sold the series to Warner Bros, making TV effects history.

ga desktop computers that formed the core equipment which generated what eventually became Emmy-winning special visual effects.

Without the advent of new technology, specifically NewTek's Video Toaster computer system and the Lightwave 3D software, *BABYLON 5* would not have been possible. The ability to create feature-film quality special effects using something other than traditional SFX-generating techniques is what gave the series its cutting edge quality and economics to make the project viable. As the series developed, the





The Babylon 5 station in orbit, CGI effects created by Foundation Imaging. Their Emmy-winning work for the series ushered in the age of inexpensive desktop computer efx. Left: The Vorlon ships. Below: Narn cruiser.



target, everyone's angry and tense until Lyta sends the password to Talia Winters. The programmed personality surfaces and destroys the real Talia. Before leaving, Lyta visits Ambassador Kosh who once again reveals his true visage to her.

Straczynski merely hinted of the intimate relationship that had developed between Susan and Talia. Larry DiTillio would have approached it differently. "It was kind of walked around very gingerly, that was a mistake," said DiTillio. "I thought they should hit it right on the head like they did on DEEP SPACE NINE. In 200 years, we'll probably be over our homophobia. But who knows?"

With this episode, it is now very likely that Talia Winters was "Control" from Bureau 13, first hinted in the first season episode, "A Spider in the Web."



Garibaldi drags away Talia Winters (Andrea Thompson), exposed as a Psi Corps traitor, screaming "You're dead!" in "Divided Loyalties."

"No dictator, no invader can hold an imprisoned population by force of arms forever. There is no greater power in the universe than the need for freedom. Against that power governments and tyrants and armies can not stand. The Centauri learned this lesson once. We will teach it to them again."

—G'Kar to the council when he is expelled as ambassador

THE LONG, TWILIGHT STRUGGLE

★★★★

10/18/1995. #219 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by John C. Flinn III

The Narn are planning an all-out attack on Gorash 7, the Centauri's main supply center, but the Centauri learn of it and arrange for the Shadow ships to wipe out the Narn fleet, while the Centauri, using outlawed weapons pound the Narn homeworld back into the Stone Age. G'Kar suspects a trap but Warmaster G'sten (W. Morgan Sheppard) won't listen. Just before surrendering, the Kha'Ri orders G'Kar to request sanctuary on Babylon 5.

Sheridan takes a stand: Babylon 5 will be the one point of light to stand against the army of darkness. Draal (John Schuck) invites Sheridan and Delenn down to the planet and pledges his help and Sheridan meets the Rangers for the first time.

For the first time, the phrase "army of light" is enunciated by Sheridan in his meeting with the Rangers when equal authority is bestowed upon him by Delenn.

"It was a shame we lost the original Draal," said Larry DiTillio, referring to actor Louis Turenne who originated the character in "Voice in the Wilderness." "He got sick and couldn't play the part at the time. We filled in with John Schuck who just said, 'Well, the machine made me look younger...' That's the cover story and you work with that."

"The stuff with Zathras was priceless. That's the greatest character to ever come out of B5. Tim



Starfury fighters, CGI effects created for BABYLON 5 by Netter Digital, which took over effects work on the series for its fourth and fifth seasons, an inhouse facility owned by B5 executive producer Douglas Netter.

have to go through several layers of producers to approve shots. Now you should leave the people who are specialists in one particular thing to do their job, and don't interfere with it. We will know the best effect to put in there a lot better than any producer will."

FI's initial task during the series' first season was mighty. The orders were to literally build a universe outside the Babylon 5 station and make it look real and not computer-generated. FI's job, in addition to having a five-mile long, rotating hunk of steel floating over Epsilon 3, was to design and create spacecrafts for four galactic species. There was the fleet of one-man "Starfury" spacecrafts that were part of Babylon 5's defense grid, distinctive spacecraft designs for the Minbari, the Narn and the Centauri. Plus, there was the Earth Alliance battlecruisers. Most prominently, there was the frightening and powerful enemy—the black and spidery Shadows.

"People always tell us we're doing things so differently, and it's the best we've ever seen," said Lebowitz. "I feel we don't come to work with the attitude 'Let's be really different today and let's blow them away with something they've never seen before.' We all come into work with the idea of doing the best job we can."

"I think the end result is just the sum of all the parts," added Teska. "We have the freedom, the technology and the drive. And we're trying to put a little more emotion and pizzazz in all the shots."

"Traditional effects for a good space battle would take you weeks and dozens of people," said Leibowitz. "There was a much larger barrier between shots in someone's head and what winds up on screen. For us, I can read a script and see a shot

written on paper, and get a really nice idea in my head. And in a day, that shot is more or less blocked out and done because there is much less a stumbling block between the idea and what shows up on the screen. Maybe for the first time, creative people have an easier job of getting their ideas up on the screen. You don't have to explain it to a hundred people, and they have to explain it to their people and when problems happen, you have to rethink the shot."

For example, when it came time to design the Shadow vessels, inspiration came from an unusual source. "The week before I built it, there was a PBS documentary on black widow spiders," Thornton said. "My wife and I saw it and we just couldn't sleep after that, it was so horrible. They had these big close-ups of this spider actually biting. They'd dressed a piece of pork or something to look like an arm and they put a slight electric shock or something into the 'arm' to make the spider bite and it was just 'eeeeiu.' And it comes from that. I wanted to get the same sort of feeling you get from a black widow. When you see one of those things, you know it's not good for you. So I wanted really wicked looking spikey things."

Said Lebowitz, "I love animating the Shadowman; the ship itself has such a feel that every time you do a shot with it, it just sort of dictates how you're going to photograph it. The way it moves, the way you don't quite see the whole thing at any given time. It has a ballet to its motion. I know something funny that came out of it. Ron designed the ship to move face first with the legs behind it, but in 'The Coming of Shadows' we had a huge battle with the Shadow men and in doing the animation I kind of liked the way they worked with the legs

facing you. So we had these legs, these big fingers right in your face. I thought that was more menacing but we had established that they flew the other way."

"But we took it from there and said, 'No, they go every way,'" interjected Thornton.

"So we figured when they're flying they have the legs behind them but their battle posture is either way around," said Lebowitz.

When the Shadow vessels engaged in battle, their powerful lasers just lashed out and cut through their opponents like butter. "The idea was that they are just so evil that they don't even have to aim," said Lebowitz. "They just fire in the general direction and they move the beam until it just slices through the ship. Just slice-and-dice like a big ole light sabre or something. But I think that even though it's just a laser weapon firing, the way we do it just feels nastier."

Going even further, Thornton declared, "People are lucky they're getting a shot. In previous instances, [other productions] would ask, 'Can we get a shot' or do we all have to watch a screen and say, 'Look out, Look out!' They run out of money and they can't do any more. And they have what we call 'radio battles.'" Thornton refers to a practice where if a special effects shot is not available, it's cheaper to just have the characters watch and convey the action via dialogue.

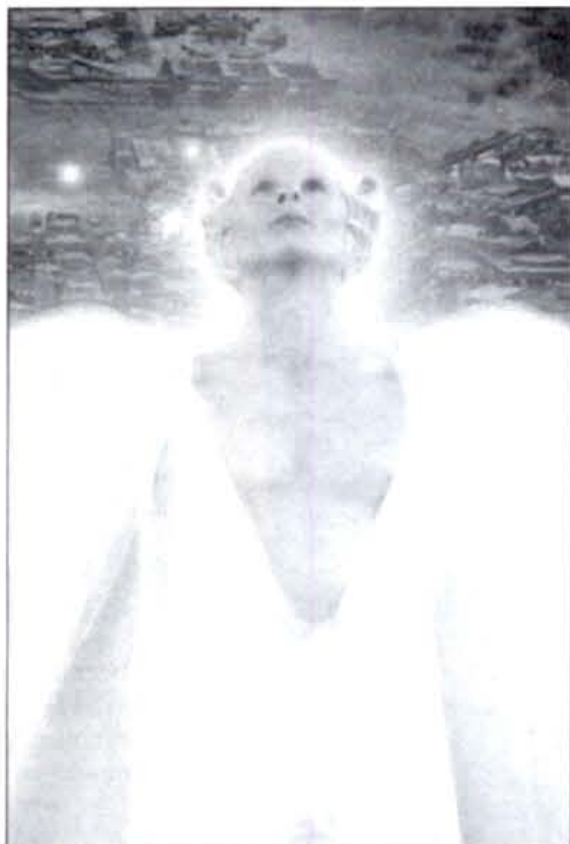
"We get scripts pretty far in advance, but they catch up with us," explained Lebowitz. "what happens is we get a monster of a script, and if we're lucky we'll get a show that's light on effects. It winds up that we're working on two or three shows at a time. Or racing to get them out the door. But we're all very proud that not once have we gotten a script and said, 'We're sorry but we can't do this. We don't have the time or the money.' We've done everything they've asked for."

"I remember there have been times when Mojo has added shots," quipped Teska.

With rapid technological advances helping creative technicians realize their wildest dreams, "Mojo," Teska and Thornton all agree that the formation of Foundation Imaging was on the ground floor of a new beginning in modern filmmaking. "We may see a renaissance in special effects, because all of these

“When we started on the pilot, we gained Straczynski's trust. We said, 'We're not going to screw you up. We'll give more than you can expect for what you're paying for.'”

—Fx designer Ron Thornton—



Foundation Imaging rendered Kosh as a creature of light, appearing as a Minbari angel to Delenn in "Fall of Night."

effects are beginning to move in different directions, like the Silicon Studio from Silicon Graphics is a box designed just to computer-generate sets in real time," said Lebowitz. "It will change the entire industry in just generating sets. A soap opera will be able to afford to have scenes in France and Tokyo and New York. In 10 or 20 years, digital technology will enable anyone with the skills to create wonderful visual effects. Right now we're in the trends of movies that everyone has to be bigger and better and more stunning than the next person, and nobody cares about the story anymore. I think in 20 years when good visual effects will be cheap and easy, Hollywood is going to find that the only advantage they have left is creativity—story."

At the end of BABYLON 5's third season, Foundation Imaging parted ways with Babylonian Productions and moved on to other projects, one of them STAR TREK: VOYAGER. Netter Digital Imaging was brought in as an "in-house" facility to service the needs of the series' fourth and fifth season. Owned by B5 executive producer Douglas Netter, only two employees, Patrick Perez and Shant Jordan, from FI stayed behind and continued to work for the series. □

effects artists who have been working for years are starting to use the computer," said Lebowitz. "Maybe for the first time, they'll be able to get their ideas out."

"We try and convince people to do it," injected Thornton. "The traditional guys often say, 'Oh boy, you guys are going to put us out of business.' We say *au contraire*. The best thing you can do is learn how to use it. Any of us can teach a good effects guy how to use a computer in a matter of weeks. We can't teach a guy who just sat coding ten years of art experience. That's why a lot of these CGI places produce crap."

One of the very first things Thornton said to Straczynski as they began the B5 project was "Just write what you want, and we'll figure out how to do it."

These fellows say the future of visual special effects, particularly for television, is exciting and revolutionary. In their eyes, the best is yet to come. "Special ef-



G'Kar requests B5 sanctuary and gives a speech about freedom to Londo when he's thrown off the council in "The Long, Twilight Struggle."

Choate did such a good job in playing the character and Joe did such a good job in writing him."

"You have the audacity to presume that you are on a mission from God, embarked upon a holy cause. I don't believe it, and by the time you leave here, neither will you."

—The inquisitor to Delenn

COMES THE INQUISITOR

★★★★

10/25/1995. #221 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Michael Vejar.

Kosh calls in an Inquisitor, Mr. Sebastian (Wayne Alexander) to interrogate Delenn's motives and because she is willing to give her life to save Sheridan he knows her calling is pure. Sheridan discovers Mr. Sebastian is Jack the Ripper whom the Vorlons snatched 400 hundred years ago. Garibaldi can't let G'Kar receive illegal weapons on the station but he can put him in contact with someone outside. G'Kar must prove his ability to deliver on his promises to keep control of the local Narns and asks Sheridan to help get a message from the Narn homeworld.

Noted John Iacovelli, series production designer, "The great thing for us about each new director is they look at our same old tired sets and they say, 'Wow! I could shoot this differently. I can get a new look out of this.' I'm amazed at Mike Vejar's 'Comes the Inquisitor.' The show looks completely different!"

"No two people shoot the same sets the same way and so you end up getting a very different kind of look which is a great reason to have different directors. They just see things completely differently and they emphasize different characters differently and you can see a little bit different side of each of the characters, and of the sets as well. Some of the directors love showing off the

Sheridan is tortured by the Inquisitor, actually Jack the Ripper, recruited by the Vorlons 400 years before, in "Comes the Inquisitor."



B5 MUSIC

Composer Christopher Franke on mixing classical and electronic.

Thanks to pioneering musician/composer Christopher Franke, *BABYLON 5* boasts a powerful blend of classical and electronic music which, symphonically-speaking, has taken the show above and beyond most of its rivals.

"One of the great things about *BABYLON 5* is that each episode is very different to work on," said Franke. "The show requires such a wide variety of music for all the different worlds, races, scenes and ideas, that I'm always experimenting with a combination of electronic and acoustic instruments. So *BABYLON 5* is like a perfect platform for me to live out my thoughts and dreams."

Franke, a former member of Tangerine Dream whose film credits include *UNIVERSAL SOLDIER*, was hired to provide *BABYLON 5*'s musical compositions following the departure of Stewart Copeland, who had worked on the show's pilot, "The Gathering," but was unable to score each episode of the weekly series due to other work commitments. Franke replaced Copeland's "techobeat" score with a more effective blend of orchestra and electronically-synthesized music.



Franke, B5 pioneer.

Around 50% of *BABYLON 5*'s score is produced electronically by Franke at his studio in California, whilst the remainder is performed on the other side of the world, by the Berlin Symphonic Film Orchestra in Germany. "We use a 'CuSeeMe' connection," explained Franke. "It's like a picture telephone. I can write the music in California and within seconds, it's being played in Germany!"

Franke worked closely with series creator/executive producer J. Michael Straczynski, who supervised and approved all compositions for the show. Their collaboration reached new heights at the end of the series' third season, when Franke provided the music for the two blues numbers written by Straczynski for "Walkabout."

"Joe is fantastic to me because he leaves



me [to explore] my territory," said Franke. "I can play my ideas out but he is also very helpful when I have to present something storywise. He gives me guidance at certain moments, but at other times, he leaves me a lot of freedom. That's turned out to be good, because I can then come up with some of my own ideas which he likes. So I think we have a very good symmetry there."

As well as providing *BABYLON 5*'s incidental and background music, Franke is also responsible for the show's main tune, which he has drastically revised each season to reflect the changes in the series' over-arching storyline. Although the title tune has changed dramatically each year, Franke felt that each variation successfully represented the battle for peace which the crew of *Babylon 5* have embarked upon.

"The main theme is supposed to be a powerful, straightforward source of sound," he explained. "It has certain progressions which are very classical. Some people think that it's militaristic, because it uses a little military percussion. But it's actually not meant to be militaristic; it's supposed to be forceful. The characters in the show are peacemakers and, in a way, the main theme represents them drumming for peace."

David Bassom

set and they do these wonderful dolly moves. Other directors, you hardly see any of the set, which is fine because we've seen so much of it. But it helps with the variations."

"I'm here to sign a non-aggression treaty with the Centauri. Before I leave here, there will be an Earth-Centauri alliance that will guarantee peace for Earth. We will, at last, know peace in our time."

—Frederick Lantz to Sheridan and Ivanova

THE FALL OF NIGHT

★★★ 1/2

11/1/1995. #222 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Janet Greek.

Frederick Lantz (Roy Dotrice) of the Ministry of Peace and Mr. Wells (John Vickery) head of the Nightwatch signs a non-aggression pact with the Centauri, even though they are now attacking Drazi and Pak'Ma'Ra territories. When Sheridan gives sanctuary to a disabled Narn warship, Nightwatch informs Mr. Wells, but Sheridan refuses to turn them over to the Centauri. In the ensuing battle the station destroys a Centauri cruiser and as the Starfuries escort the Narn ship through a jump gate, Lantz and Wells are furious at Sheridan but since the Centauri fired first he's let off with a public apology to Londo. On his way to the meeting, a Centauri plants a bomb in the core shuttle and Sheridan jumps out. Kosh reveals himself to save Sheridan as he flies out of his encounter suit. Every race sees something different, a being of light from their own race's particular myths. It is only Londo who declares "Nothing! I saw nothing!"

"From a production standpoint it was a little difficult to visually create what Joe was writing," noted Jeffrey Willerth, who was under Kosh's curtains beginning in this second season. "I say that because they had to make decisions about [Kosh's] facial qualities. I think it was the best combination of what we wanted to do and physically could do."

"The whole sequence was a composite of three different people who became Kosh flying through the air. They dressed me up in skimpy little tights and put the flowing robe on me. I stood in front of a blue screen and I think I was the body that was floating up through the air."

Actor Joshua Patton was the human and Minbari Kosh while uncredited Walt Phelan was the Drazi/Narn Kosh.

This was director Janet Greek's final episode until the fifth season's "No Compromises" because her agents felt she was doing too much science fiction and because Greek had a baby and wanted to write screenplays.

"We like Janet a lot," said Joe Straczynski. "She has a very strong visual style and is great at composition." Noted Greek, "It was an expensive episode and challenging. Filming a zero-gravity sequence was new to actors and the crew. We had a lot of experimentation to do."

After the discovery of a Centauri bomb, Sheridan desperately jumps out of the core shuttle to what seems a certain death in "The Fall of Night."



CAITLIN BROWN

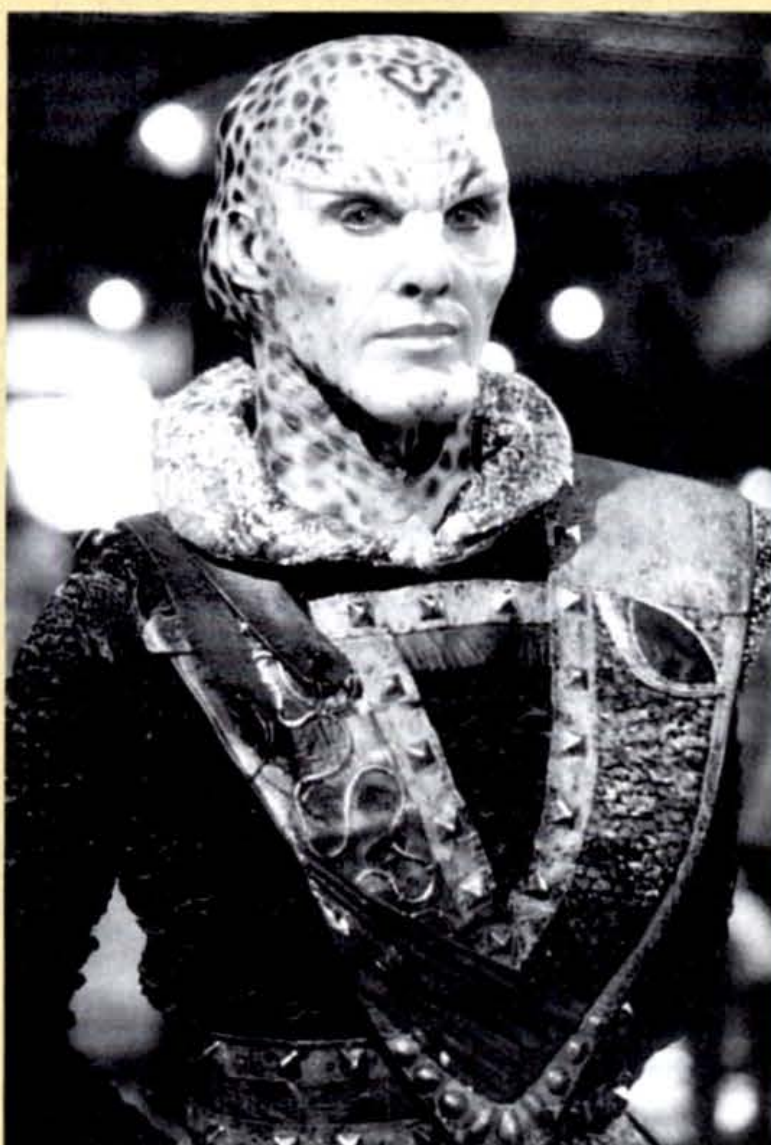
The actress / singer on her brief, memorable role as Na'Toth, G'Kar's butt-kicking diplomatic attache.

By David Bassom

Caitlin Brown played Na'Toth in just five episodes of *BABYLON 5*'s first season, but her uncompromising portrayal of the no-nonsense Narn won the actress a place in the hearts of the show's viewers around the world. She returned to tie-up the character in *B-5*'s last year and still receives fan mail for her work and makes guest appearances at *BABYLON 5* conventions. Brown feels both flattered and delighted by her continued association with the show.

"I was talking to [series creator/executive producer] Joe Straczynski recently and I told him that working on *BABYLON 5* has affected my life in more ways than I could ever have imagined," she explained. "Part of that has to do with the way that the show touches so many other lives. The fans are really lovely and the show makes them happy, which is what you want to do as an actor: you want to tell the story, touch people's lives and hopefully move something in them. It's great because I get to see it happening when I go to conventions and when I go on the Internet. So it's very touching that people have remembered me for playing Na'Toth. I'm very happy."

Given Brown's success and popularity in the role of Na'Toth, it's surprising to learn that she almost missed out on the chance of serving as Ambassador G'Kar's diplomatic attache. Originally, Mary Woronov (of *EATING RAOUL* fame) landed the role of G'Kar's aide Ko'Dath and was introduced in "Born To The Purple," the third episode of the show's first season. Upon completing her debut outing, however, Woronov decided that she could not face another session in the make-up chair, and her character was unceremoniously killed off. Shortly after, Susan Kellerman was cast as Ko'Dath's replacement, Na'Toth, but the actress suffered a bout of claustrophobia during her first morning on the show, and wisely decided to drop out.



Julie Caitlin Brown, billed as Caitlin Brown on the series, as Na'Toth, appearing in just five episodes first season, she returned to tie-up the character in *B5*'s last year.

Faced with the prospect of finding an immediate replacement, *BABYLON 5*'s casting agent Mary Jo Slater turned to actress/singer Caitlin Brown, who besides having appeared in such stage and screen productions as *GRAND HOTEL*, *RAVEN*, *DREAM ON*, *WOLF*, *B. L. STRYKER* and *CHAINS OF GOLD*, had also donned extensive prosthetics as a guest star in the *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION* two-parter "Gambit" and *DEEP SPACE NINE*'s "The Passenger."

"They needed someone who was tall and could handle the prosthetics," recalled Brown. "I had previously auditioned for the roles of Delenn and Ivanova, so they must have remembered me when they needed a new Na'Toth. I was paged at ten o'clock in

the morning, got to the set at one in the afternoon and started shooting the next day."

From her first appearance in "The Parliament Of Dreams," it was clear that Na'Toth was intended to be more than just a comic foil for Ambassador G'Kar. "Na'Toth had a lot of depth to her," said Brown. "Sometimes when you're a 'sidekick character,' you're kinda shoved off to the side for the first couple of seasons and then they start to develop you later. Well, Joe made it very clear that he didn't want me to play her like that, but as someone who is very sure about what she wants and what's she going to do."

The actress had no trouble striking up a relationship with Andreas Katsulas, who played Na'Toth's partner in interstellar politics, G'Kar. "Andreas and I had an instant rapport," she enthused. "He was very sweet to me from the moment I walked onto that set, and we would spend a lot of time together discussing our characters' points of view. The last time I saw Andreas, I hugged him and I told him I missed him. He was wonderful to work with."

Although certain scenes suggested that there was a romantic attraction between G'Kar and Na'Toth, the actress dismissed the idea that the Narn duo could have become *BABYLON 5*'s answer to Clark Kent and Lois Lane. "I think Andreas would have completely adored a relationship between G'Kar and Na'Toth, and I would have too," she said. "It was a definite love/hate thing. But I don't think Joe intended there to be any hint of romance between the two characters."

Two of Brown's most memorable moments in the series came when she was required to demonstrate Na'Toth's physical strength and prowess. In "The Parliament Of Dreams," she assaulted Ambassador G'Kar in an effort to win a Narn assassin's trust, whilst in "Deathwalker," she mounted a vicious attack on the evil war criminal



Brown, clowning on the set with Andreas Katsulas as G'Kar, who fears his new aide is actually an assassin sent to kill him in "Parliament of Dreams."

Jha'Dur (Sarah Douglas).

"I do the vicious thing well," the actress laughed. "I apologized profusely to Andreas' stunt double before I shot the fight scene in 'Parliament of Dreams.' I said to him, 'I want you to know that I think you're a wonderful person and I hope this doesn't get in the way of our friendship, but I'm going to beat the hell out of you!' I did enjoy myself doing that. In fact, I got so excited doing it that I kicked the camera at one point. It was my first week on the show, and I broke thousands of dollars worth of equipment!"

"Beating up Sarah Douglas was really fun. Skip [Beaudine], who was our assistant director at the time, didn't want to let me do that scene at first, but I managed to convince him that I could handle it. My son [Dustin] saw it afterwards and he said to me, 'You fight like a gangster! You fight like a member of a street gang!' That was the highest praise—when my 13-year-old son liked the way I looked on film!"

Sadly, Brown's butt-kicking reign in the role of Na'Toth came to an abrupt close at the end of *BABYLON 5*'s first season. While the actress was reluctant to leave the series, she admitted that contractual difficulties and Na'Toth's extensive prosthetics were the key factors in her departure.

"Any time you're doing science fiction and having to wear prosthetics, it takes a lot of discipline and strength to hit your mark, say your lines and do your work," she explained. "I've done 700 performances on

Broadway, and as grueling as that could be, nothing was like what Andreas and I had to go through when we were working 15 hours a day on *BABYLON 5*. And then on top of that, your work isn't really respected by most producers outside the science fiction genre.

"I cried when I turned the part down. I called my mother and I said, 'I don't know what to do. This is one of the best-written female characters I've ever come across, and she's going to have a lot to do in the show.' But she told me, 'I don't think you should do it the way it's been put to you.' When I turned the role down, [*BABYLON 5*'s] producers called and asked me why I was leaving, and I said, 'I'm sorry, but I just couldn't do it.'"

After toying with the idea of assigning G'Kar a series of short-lived diplomatic aides à la *MURPHY BROWN*, Straczynski decided to keep the character of Na'Toth in the series. Thus, Brown was replaced by Mary Kay Adams, who at the time was best known to SF buffs for her portrayal of the Klingon Grilka in the *STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE* episode "The House Of Quark." Unfortunately, while she had experience of both the genre and extensive makeups, Adams never seemed comfortable as Na'Toth, and the character was subsequently written out of the series.

"Mary Kay Adams is a wonderful actress," stated Brown. "She's just done another *STAR TREK* [the *DEEP SPACE NINE* episode "Looking For Par'Mach In All The Wrong Places"]. It was just very difficult for her to play Na'Toth because Joe and I had already established a definite characterization. She really couldn't depart from that too much, and the fans noticed the difference."

Since leaving the show, Brown has starred in the telemovies *MURDER LIVE* and *LOVERS' KNOT*, and was featured in such TV shows as *RENEGADE*, *VANISHING SON*, *JAG* and *POINT MAN*. She also returned to the soundstages of *BABYLON 5* (minus Narn make-up and billed under her real name, Julie Caitlin Brown) to play Earth Alliance lawyer Guinevere Corey in "There All The Honor Lies."

"It was great to be on the show in regular

"It would be brilliant to see G'Kar pregnant! Narn are marsupials—they carry their children in their pouches—and the males finish the gestation."

—Actress Caitlin Brown—

involved, so it will be hard to have a lawyer in the show."

Asked if there is anything she would have liked to see Na'Toth do before the end of space station saga, Brown replied, "I think it would have been brilliant to see G'Kar pregnant! Narn are marsupials—they carry their children in their pouches—and the males finish the gestation, so I think it would have been great to see Na'Toth come back, have a love affair with G'Kar, and have a child. Then, when he is indisposed, I could take over and run everything. That isn't something I discussed with Joe, but I would have loved to see that happen."

In the meantime, Brown is currently recording an album for her blues and jazz group, The Julie Caitlin Brown Band. The actress/singer is highly amused by the suggestion that she should record a novelty album as Na'Toth. "Given that Na'Toth has a very dry sense of humor, that would be great," she laughed. "Of course, if I did decide to do it, Joe Straczynski would have to write all the songs."

Whatever the future holds, Caitlin Brown is proud to have starred in *BABYLON 5* and believes that the show's growing popularity stems from its gritty, reality-driven depiction of humanity's future.

"I think *BABYLON 5* scares people in a titillating way, like a really cool roller-coaster," she said. "It makes people think, 'My God, in two or three hundred years time, are we going to fix our problems or are they going to keep plaguing us?' When we look at our own history, we've been fighting each other for thousands of years—who's to say that won't continue? So I think the show makes people feel better in a very strange sense: it makes them feel that 'maybe we're not so bad because the characters in the show don't have it right.' *BABYLON 5*'s humanity is very appealing to a lot of viewers." □

Brown, minus the prosthetics that weighed heavily on her decision to leave the series after five shows.



SEASON THREE "Point of No Return"

"We have danced our last little dance together, Mr. Morden. Now it is time for you to go away."

—Londo

"Why would they just disappear for a thousand years?"

—Endawi, about the Shadows

MATTERS OF HONOR

★★★ 1/2

11/6/1995. #301 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Kevin J. Cremin.

Marcus Cole (Jason Carter) is a Ranger who arrives on the station half dead to bring news that a Ranger training camp on Zagros VII, a Drazi world, is in danger of being attacked because of a Centauri blockade. Marcus asks Sheridan to help rescue the Rangers. Londo breaks off with Morden (Ed Wasser) but then Morden contacts Lord Refa (William Forward) who agrees to pull Centauri forces from Zagros VII. Delenn introduces Sheridan to the White Star, a ship of Minbari/Vorlon design that can be used for covert missions. During the White Star's shakedown cruise, they engage a Shadow vessel and destroy it by collapsing a jump gate on it. David Endawi (Tucker Smallwood) from EarthForce Intelligence wants information about the Shadow ships. When he returns to Earth, reporting that no one knows anything, we learn Morden has made a deal with a female Senator and a member of Psi Corps.



During the shakedown cruise of the White Star, Sheridan engages a Shadow ship and collapses a jumpgate to destroy it in "Matters of Honor."

In addition to giving them a hand-drawn sketch, to help them visualize the White Star, Foundation Imaging visual effects artist Ron Thornton recalled, "Joe Straczynski told us, 'It's Minbari and it's Vorlon but it's got a little bit of Earth in it as well.'" His colleague Adam "Mojo" Liebowitz agreed, "If you just looked at it you might not say that, but if you looked at it next to Earth, Vorlon and Minbari ships you could see it all in there."

"To see Sheridan captaining a Minbari cruiser is just the last thing you would ever expect to see," noted Joe Straczynski. "Therefore, it's why we did it."

The death of Keffer (Robert Rusler) and the introduction of Marcus Cole were specifically introduced to the saga, said Straczynski, to provide a different perspective. "In the sense that too often shows like this tend to focus on the guys on the top of the command chain, I said let's see one of the guys who are a couple of rungs down. Let's see the squadron pilots who we often see going to fight but we don't necessarily know who they are. It came for a desire to give a somewhat different point of view to things. Someone who wasn't at a command level. But I can say also [Keffer] wasn't far enough out of the command chain to be as much of a free-floating agent of chaos that I wanted."



Londo jumps into a nearby turbolift to escape an explosion in "Convictions," as a bomber aboard the station has everyone tense and on alert.

That led me toward bringing in someone like Jason."

"I did what I did because all life is sacred. But when the object of your actions does not share that belief, I fear I have served the present by sacrificing the future."

—Lennier about Londo

CONVICTIONS

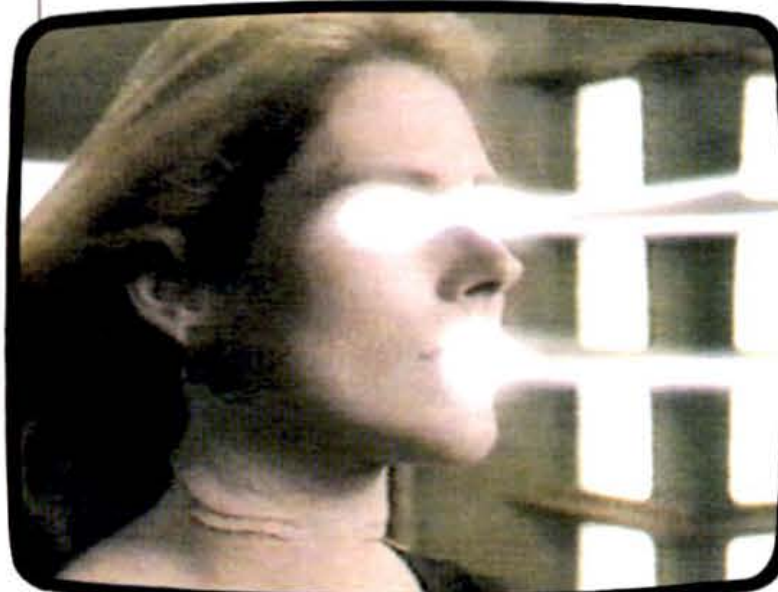
★★★

11/13/1995. #302 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Michael Vejar.

A series of explosions aboard the station has everyone aboard tense and on alert. The command staff frantically search for the bomber. Lennier's caught in the middle of the terrorism and is injured in the act of saving Londo from the explosion. Another blast traps Londo and G'Kar in a turbolift. The two wounded foes pass the time by verbally sparring with each other amidst the ruins. Ivanova asks a group of monks headed by Brother Theo (Louis Turenne) to review security video footage to find the person responsible. The monk's research reveals one figure present at the bombings: Robert J. Carlsen, a disgruntled drifter. Sheridan confronts Carlsen who holds a deadman's switch trigger. When the bomb is located, it is sent into deep space and away from the station where it explodes.

For series producer John Copeland, watching G'Kar and Londo's constantly evolving relationship unfold was a source of much pleasure. "I guess you could call them the 'best of enemies,'" he said. "The characters themselves, as they came out of Joe's mind, I think are two of the best we have ever had in science fiction entertainment. It's very hard for me to capsuleize everything about them. Both G'Kar and Londo go through amazing changes through the course of the series and those changes brought about by the experiences they have bring them both closer together and at the same time solidify the things which they will never be able to resolve between themselves. I think many viewers found it gratifying to watch Londo and G'Kar and how they changed."

Ambassador Kosh takes back part of his essence from the Vorlon-altered telepath, Lyta Alexander in "Passing Through Gethsemane."



Trivia: Brother Theo is named for Vincent Van Gogh's sibling.

"Sort of like an interstellar gardener, plucking out all of the weeds so that the flowers can grow."

"Basically, yes."

"Well, let's just hope that High-IQ boys back home give us all the right answers to this test. Otherwise we're gonna get hit with a 500,000-megaton weedwhacker."

—Ivanova and Sheridan

A DAY IN THE STRIFE

★★ 1/2

11/20/1995. #303 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by David J. Eagle.

In the midst of a Dockworker's Guild dispute, Sheridan is faced with an alien probe that arrives at the station, offering information about advanced technology if a string of questions are answered. Sheridan and Ivanova scramble to assemble the answers to 75 questions. Meanwhile, Na'Far (Stephen Macht) comes to replace G'Kar as Narn's representative and to send him home. Ta'Lon the Narn (Marshall Teague) kidnapped with Sheridan in "All Alone in the Night" is his bodyguard who tries to convince G'Kar to stay. Londo calls in a favor with Delenn and assigns Vir as cultural attache to Minbar.



An alien probe arrives at the station, offering information about advanced technology in "A Day in the Strife," as B5 pilots threaten to strike.

For director David Eagle, real-life events eerily mirrored the art in this episode. When Sheridan and Ivanova are faced with the pilots association strike, Eagle was similarly confronted by a crew's strike three days into the shooting. "It was an ironic kind of thing," he said. "We were shut down for three days. I started the week off with a non-union crew and ended up at the end of the week with a union crew. It was all the same people." And now, whenever Eagle shows up on the set, "they would rib me about whether or not they would stick around for my next show. That became a running joke."

"We believe that the universe itself is conscious in a way we can never truly understand. It is engaged in a search for meaning so it breaks itself apart investing its own consciousness in every form of life. We are the universe trying to understand itself."

—Delenn

PASSING THROUGH GETHSEMANE

★★★ 1/2

11/27/1995. #305 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Adam Nimoy.

Lyta Alexander (Patricia Tallman) returns from Vorlon space as Kosh's aide. The doctor's examination shows she's in better health than when she left. One of the resident monks, Brother Edward (Brad Dourif), begins to experience a series of baffling, frightening images. Researching

SEASON TWO

The station gets a change of commanders, a bold move that assured the series' continued success.

By Frank Garcia
and Robert T. Garcia

In novelistic terms, the radical move of taking Commander Jeffrey Sinclair "off the chessboard" and replacing him with another one, Captain John Sheridan, was quite daring. Fortunately, as history showed it, choosing Boxleitner made for a very successful transition, although he was cast so late in the process there was only eight days before filming began.

"I had worked with Bruce before so I knew what a positive influence he was going to be on the cast," recalled Peter Jurasik who was also in *TRON* (1982) with Boxleitner. "He's a very elegant man, a very professional actor. He's almost optimistic and enthusiastic to a fault. He's really the quintessential leader on the set. Playing the lead role is a difficult thing to do on a series because you naturally become the leader of the cast. Bruce has such an easygoing way you almost don't even recognize it. Michael O'Hare, on the other hand, I felt was not experienced enough and struggled with that role and the position that he had to hold. I don't think he handled it as nearly as [well as] Bruce did. Bruce was quite a relief, actually. We felt like the person holding the reins was our leader who was now quite calm and sure."

According to series story editor Larry DiTillio, Michael O'Hare's heroic portrayal "was a very interesting character that was cast against his type. He was a good-looking guy, but he wasn't terrifically good looking. There was a lot about Sinclair that was unlikable. It was part of his charm as a character that he was not likable. He just had this brooding quality that really made you watch him all the time, and think he was going to blow up at any minute. Bruce

doesn't have that quality. Bruce was a breath of fresh air. Bruce is much more a regular guy, more midwestern. Sinclair was more urban."

An important early second episode, the Hugo award-winning "The Coming of Shadows" was a turning point for both the Centauri and the Narn. It was an episode that especially heightened the yin-yang conflict between the two races. When Londo dreams, the images that bombard his brain are glimpses of the future. "Joe loved to play with 'Was it real or a dream?'" not-



Delenn (Mira Furlan) and Vorlon Ambassador Kosh attempt to warn Sheridan of the Shadows' threat in "In The Shadows of Z'ha'dum."

ed Peter Jurasik. "One of his banners is 'Things are not what they seem.' Presenting Londo in that way, in dreams as part of a prophecy, and then as a narrator in 'In the Beginning.' It just continued Joe's wonderful style. He just likes to make things enigmatic, mysterious and veiled."

When the Centauri Emperor arrived on B5 for a tour, G'Kar was angry and prepared to assassinate the leader. But the Emperor collapsed and died in Medlab before G'Kar could reach him. When word reached G'Kar of a mysterious and deadly assault on a Narn colony by an unknown and deadly force, and that Centauri warships were in the area at the time, he was furious. At a Council meeting, a crushed G'Kar announced that the Narn race had declared war on the Centauri. Peace was no longer possible.

"It was a pinnacle," said Jurasik. "It was an arching episode in terms of the drama. People loved the turns. For a moment they had a high point at a mountaintop and felt like they were looking ahead and what was coming. People responded to that moment where they could see how they'd gotten there and where they were headed. At that point, the audience is ahead of a lot of the characters."

A favorite dramatic scene for both the fans and Jurasik was when G'Kar bought Londo a drink. The chill factor was that the audience and Londo knew that the Shadows were going to assault the Narn colony but G'Kar does not. "The audience gets to look at it from a perspective," agreed Jurasik.

This episode is frequently cited as a fan favorite, as demonstrated by the Hugo award and director Janet Greek provides a very simple explanation to the series' success. "Let's face it—it's brilliant," she said. "It really is about the writing and the plot-



Bruce Boxleitner comes aboard the station to replace Michael O'Hare's Sinclair, with (l to r) Jerry Doyle as Garibaldi, Andrea Thompson as telepath Talia Winters, Claudia Christian as Ivanova and Richard Biggs.

ting and it's a brilliantly conceived story. One of the things about this series that I really like is that *BABYLON 5* has not become a soap opera because the issues are often political, instead of personal. Sometimes I've wished that there would be some more personal things in it on some level, but the balance is good because I think that the political intrigue stuff is so real. And it really makes the series fascinating and hard to anticipate."

Being one of the very few people who was familiar with the contents of the triple-encrypted files that contained Straczynski's epic saga, DiTillio began thinking in sweeping terms as the season began, and he started plotting out what needed to be done and how he would participate. "I knew where the five-year arc was going, but I didn't know all the details of how it was going to get there," recalled DiTillio. "By the second year, I was looking at the overall picture, and what I decided to do, what I talked to Joe about, was to fill in areas he wasn't dealing with. Basically, the arc was Joe's. He was the one who should write that arc. He knew

where it was going, where it was going to end up. To have a somebody—a freelancer or even myself who knew the story—come in and try to write arc stories, it wouldn't work.

"What I was trying to do, and what I strived for a lot in the first season, was plugging in my stuff for the arc. 'Knives' was really my first shot at that and 'Spider in the Web' as well. I consider all of my stories for the second year as arc stories. They were just filling in a part of the arc that Joe wasn't dealing with. I was trying fill out the station a lot, and that's why I did the Mutai story in 'TKO.'"

DiTillio employed a very clever technique to help him get to know the actors, which also served as a tool to help him create stories for the characters they were portraying. "I interviewed every actor on the show when they came in, to do character profiles for the [series] bible," he said. "I asked them about their interests, their hobbies, and what they thought their character could do. I wrote all that down and what resulted was a mix of the actor's own personal likes or dislikes."

his own past, Edward realizes that he was once a serial killer and that he's been "mindwiped" and transformed as a monk to do penance for his misdeeds. The relatives of Edward's victims have "loosened" Edward's telepathic blocks in order to exact revenge for his crimes. But Lyta manages to identify the group's leader and in the end, he too, is mindwiped and becomes a monk under the guidance of Brother Theo (Louis Turenne).

"Joe's always dealing with identity," noted Patricia Tallman. "Looking at things we have now and putting them into the context of the future so it kind of pops out at us. I love how he does that with the scripts. That's one of the values of science fiction. You take something that we're so used to and you put a different context. You put an alien face on a unpopular character and all of a sudden, you listen to the story."

Directing the first of two episodes for the series, Adam Nimoy was impressed with the well-oiled B5 machine. "It's a very good, solid production," he said. "They do a lot for very little. They know what they're doing. It's very smooth running, there are very few kinks. It's a great crew to work with. The cinematographer, John Flinn, is awesome. And the actors are great! They have the best attitude, they like each other."

"With our basic freedom at stake, no response can be too extreme. There maybe some minor and temporary abridgments in the traditionally protected areas, such as speech and association, but only until this crisis is over."

—Julie Musante to Sheridan

VOICES OF AUTHORITY

★★★ 1/2

1/29/1996. #304 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Menachen Binetski

Sheridan accepts Draal's (John Schuck) offer to use the Great Machine in searching for "the First Ones." Ivanova steps into the Great Machine's chamber and in her mind, she floats through the depths of space. In the meantime, Sheridan is occupied with an officer from the Political Office, Julie Musante (Shari Shattuck), who attempts to seduce the captain. At Sigma 957, Ivanova detects a presence but she also finds the Shadows there and escapes. Ivanova intercepts a transmission between President Clark and someone else, discussing President Santiago's assassination. Elated, Sheridan sends the information on a data crystal to General Hague for public release. Taking the White Star, Ivanova and Marcus go to Sigma 957 and convince one of the First Ones to join them in the fight against the Shadows. Musante is forced to leave the station as a result of the government shakeup and G'Kar quizzes Garibaldi and Delenn about secret meetings and covert operations.

This episode marks Draal's last appearance. He was also scheduled to appear in "War Without End" but because actor John Schuck was on the Broadway stage playing musicals, the producers

Political Officer Julie Musante (Shari Shattuck) suspects Sheridan of conspiring against Earth and attempts to uncover him by seduction.



could not resurrect the character. "We never saw the Great Machine after again!" complained Larry DiTillio. "During the big war, one of the questions on people's minds, and certainly mine, was 'Well, what the hell about the Great Machine?' He said, 'Anytime you need me!' There was a couple of times that B5 was attacked by huge fleets. What about Epsilon? Even to the end of the show, that whole thread just petered out. We never saw it again. In the end, we never found out what happened to Draal and the Great Machine."

"A darkness carried in the heart can not be cured by moving the body from one place to another."

—Lennier to Vir

"My blood is the same color as yours. And what I do, I do to protect Earth, same as you. You don't like how I do it, that's your prerogative."

—Bester to Garibaldi

DUST TO DUST

★★★ 1/2

2/05/1996. #306. Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by David J. Eagle

When Psi Cop Bester (Walter Koenig) once again visits, a group of Minbari telepaths protects the B5 command staff from telepathic infiltration. Bester agrees to an injection that temporarily nullifies his powers. He's come to warn Sheridan that a powerful Psi Corps drug, "Dust," used to increase telepathic capability in normal humans may be in distribution aboard the station. G'Kar purchases the drug and goes on a rampage, heading straight to Londo's quarters. During his attack, he telepathically receives a multitude of images revealing Londo's association with Morden, Londo's dream of his death, the Shadows' arrival on Centauri Prime and other images. In his drug-induced delusions, G'Kar witnesses his father's death, tied up to a tree. Convicted in court for his attack against Londo, G'Kar is sentenced to 60 days in jail.



Andreas Katsulas as Narn Ambassador G'Kar looks on in amazement as he sees Kosh fly away during a drug-induced vision in "Dust To Dust."

Working with G'Kar and Londo, said David Eagle, was very special. "Their chemistry is unsurpassed with any other two individuals I've had experience with," he said. "There was an incident that exemplified the way Andreas is as a professional actor. We were finished with his scenes and yet he needed to be off-camera to read his lines for Peter. I said, 'Andreas, we have to change the lights here, do you want to go and get out of makeup and costume and get more comfortable?' He said, 'Are you kidding? No. I am staying exactly in character for Peter.' He would endure the uncomfortableness for his fellow actor even though he really didn't have to. That says something about Andreas and his professionalism."

"I didn't have the opportunity to offer that to Peter, [but] I know he would have done the same thing. They were just like that off and on camera. The chemistry was perfect."



A slug-like parasite is infecting Lurkers in Downbelow in "Exogenesis," a species called the Vendrizi, offering a storehouse of knowledge.

"We were created half a million years ago, bred to be living records of all those we have seen and touched. For all that time we have travelled through the galaxy in our host bodies. We have seen double sunset on worlds so far away you have no name for them."

—Vindrizi to Marcus and Franklin

EXOGENESIS

★★

2/12/1996. #307. Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Kevin Cremin

Investigating a lurker's death, Dr. Franklin discovers an alien parasite attached to the man's spine. Marcus discovers that his Downbelow contacts will no longer deal with him. Together, they go to Brown Sector where they are captured by the parasites' victims. Their leader, Matthew Duffin (James Warwick), coerces Franklin into treating one of them. Marcus escapes and his friend Duncan (Aubrey Morris) reveals that the parasites are the Vendrizi. They are ancient, living history books who take control of those who have no reason to live. Franklin and Marcus agree not to interfere with the Vendrizi. Duncan leaves Babylon 5 to see for himself the wonders the Vendrizi have shown him.

If there was any mystery surrounding this episode, it's probably wondering why the Vendrizi didn't share with the Army of Light their vast storehouse of knowledge of galactic history and how this information could have helped them in their struggle against the Shadows from the war a thousand years ago. Producer John Copeland sheds light into the matter. "I believe that the Vendrizi were not interested in sharing any of their knowledge. As a plot device, I think that they would have weakened the mystery of discovery of just what was afoot in the galaxy."

Optic Nerve artist John Vulich admired Straczynski's approach to the characters. "If this was done on some other show, the aliens would probably be evil. But Joe takes that, which is a

Majel Barrett as Lady Morella in "Point of No Return," a guest star shot for the widow of STAR TREK creator, the late Gene Roddenberry.



cliche on other shows, and it ends up being benevolent for a reason you can't imagine to begin with. I think he has a nice way of twisting things around."

"In here, Mr Garibaldi, you can not hide from yourself. Everything out there has only one purpose. To distract us from ourselves, what is truly important. There are no distractions in here. We can learn much from silence."

—G'Kar to Garibaldi

MESSAGES FROM EARTH

★★★★

2/19/1996. #308. Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Michael Vejar

Dr. Mary Kirkish (Nancy Stafford), boards the station under Ranger escort. Dr. Kirkish has come to warn of Earth's secret operation to exploit Shadow technology. Seven years ago, she helped unearth a Shadow vessel buried on Mars. Now, another ship has been found on the Jovian moon Ganymede and Interplanetary Expeditions is about to activate it. They plan to take it to Earth, study it and possibly use it against the other races. Sheridan takes the White Star to Ganymede to destroy the ship. The Shadow ship destroys the Ganymede installation. Sheridan attacks and defeats the ship by luring it into Jupiter's gravitational well where it's crushed. They escape, but Clark uses the incident as an excuse to declare martial law on Earth.



A newly awakened Shadow ship breaks out of the cage the humans have put around it on Jupiter's Ganymede in "Messages From Earth."

Confined to his prison cell, G'Kar turns to writing about the recent Narn events to keep himself busy. The first pages of the Book of G'Kar is written. "'Y'know, what's funny is the Book of G'Kar is mostly an old phone book," chuckled Bruce Boxleitner. "We have a few aged pages in there, but the rest is made up of an old L.A. phone book. Dial 1-800-NARN!"

"There is always choice. We say there is no choice only to comfort ourselves with the decision we have already made. If you understand that, there's hope. If not..."

—Lady Morella to Londo

POINT OF NO RETURN

★★★★

2/26/1996. #309. Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Jim Johnston

Clark consolidates power by dissolving EarthGov's Senate. EarthForce officers opposing Clark take action under General Hague's command. Clark places the Nightwatch in charge of off-world security. A veiled clue from General Smits (Lewis Arquette) gives Sheridan the solution to this problem. Sheridan accepts G'Kar's offer to provide a Narn security force. Zack seemingly warns the Nightwatch of the force's arrival, but it's a trap. Since the Nightwatch broke the chain of command, by

In one example of the benefit that came out of these interview sessions, was that actor Jerry Doyle loved to cook in the kitchen. The resulting scenes in "A Distant Star," showed Security Chief Garibaldi going underground to find the rare ingredients for his favorite dish, Bagna Cauda, despite orders from Dr. Franklin to the entire command staff to engage in a diet plan.

"Stephen Furst said he was a huge opera fan and that he would love to do opera," recalled DiTillio. "It stuck in my head and I kept looking looking for a place to have Londo and Vir sing Centauri opera. I never had a story to fit it in until I needed a first scene in 'Knives' before Ursa jumps on Londo. I said, 'I'm going to have these characters sing opera. This is going to be funny, it's going to be wonderful and charming.' Stephen loved it because it was going to be opera. But Peter, well, Peter can't really sing! It was a real stretch for him.

"The one good thing about Peter is that he loves to have to stretch a bit. And I think he does a very credible job, he sang as Londo might sing it. Chris Franke wrote the music, and I wrote the words, in Centauri."

In another example that came out of interview sessions that resulted in story material, actor Richard Biggs was a "military brat." His father, a colonel, served during the Vietnam war and became the inspiration for the acclaimed episode, "GRO-POS," where actor Paul Winfield came aboard the station as Franklin's father who was a General. "Much of the dialogue of Franklin speaking about his father, is all Richard speaking about his father," said DiTillio. "It's right out of his mouth. It's obviously tweaked to be dramatic. Even the names of the sisters are Richard Bigg's sisters. They weren't all that thrilled to be mentioned on BABYLON 5. It gave Richard a chance to vent a very personal thing in his acting. And he did it very, very well. It built up Franklin as a character. It certainly built up his father as a character. It had lot of resonance for Rick and I thought it worked pretty nicely."

Shocking surprises were revealed in

“Joe loves to play with ‘Was it real or a dream?’ One of his banners is ‘Things are not always as they seem.’ He likes to make things enigmatic, mysterious.”

—Actor Peter Jurasik—



Kosh calls in Inquisitor Mr. Sebastian (Wayne Alexander) to interrogate Delenn in year two's "Comes the Inquisitor."

al difficulties, Tallman was unable to appear on the series and that's how Thompson was cast. Talia was the contingency "trapdoor" character for Lyta. And now that she wanted out, the original character resurfaced like a Jack-in-the-box.

"I was the last person to be negotiated with out of the regular cast," noted Tallman. "They offered me about one-fifth of what I expected. I expected something more fair. What they offered me was something clearly meant as an insult. It didn't come from Joe. I don't know who is exactly responsible for that. It clearly meant, 'We don't want you on this show!' So for whatever reason or whomever, I turned it down because I couldn't work for that. I was making more money as a stuntwoman. I wasn't about to become a pauper just to be on a syndicated SF-TV show that may or may not go anywhere. It was very hurtful and an insult. I decided not to go there.

"I was happy to go back and do 'Divided Loyalties,' they were paying me fairly," said Patricia Tallman. "I thought, 'It gives me a chance to get back into the shoes of Lyta' who was a fascinating character to me. But, I didn't expect it to go anywhere!'"

Most memorable for Tallman in filming

"Divided Loyalties" when B5's first telepath, Lyta Alexander (Patricia Tallman), suddenly reappeared. "One of you is a traitor and I can prove it!" she shouted at Garibaldi. Lyta explained to the command staff that Psi Corps had planted a hidden personality in someone aboard the B5 in order to learn of the station's secrets. The person carrying the "false" personality would be unaware of the program they were carrying, and Lyta has the ability to unlock that personality with a telepathic password.

This episode came out of a desire by Andrea Thompson to leave the show. She didn't feel she was doing enough. After the series, Thompson made several appearances on JAG and earned a starring role on NYPD BLUE. It gave Joe Straczynski an opportunity to retrieve the original telepath he had initially created and seen in "The Gathering" pilot.

Because of contractu-

following orders from a civilian authority, Sheridan could legally arrest them. Londo approaches Emperor Turhan's widow, the prophetess Lady Morella (Majel Barrett Roddenberry) to confirm his unsettling prophetic dreams. He learns he has three remaining chances to avoid his fate and that both he and Vir will become Emperor.

"Working with Majel was a really wonderful experience," noted Peter Jurasik. "It was interesting to watch this woman burdened by so much baggage, the Roddenberry name. She is like a first lady or a queen in a sense. But when she finally arrived at the set, she needed to take off all of that armor and awe and encounter me directly as an actor. I loved it. I have fond memories of that work."

Creator, screenwriter and executive producer Joe Straczynski, only "gives you enough basic information so you don't cross the line, but those are tough to do," recalled director Jim Johnson.

"Break the Council, and come with me. Our time of isolation is over. We move now, together, or not at all."

—Delenn to the Gray Council

"Only one human captain has ever survived battle with a Minbari fleet. He is behind me. You are in front of me. If you value your lives, be somewhere else."

—Delenn

SEVERED DREAMS

★★★★

4/4/1996. #310 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Michael Vejar.

General Hague dies aboard the Alexander during a battle. His ship, now commanded by Major Ed Ryan (Bruce McGill), seeks refuge at B5. Sheridan cuts contact with Earth. Drakhon (James Park), a fugitive Ranger, tells Delenn that the Shadows are urging allies to attack their neighbors. Delenn learns that The Gray Council have declared a strict policy of isolationism, Delenn forces a meeting accusing the Council of betraying Valen's trust by ignoring his prophecies. The Religious and Worker castes follow Delenn but the Warriors persist. Capt. Sandra Hiroshi (Kim Miyori) of The Churchill says EarthForce is coming to seize Babylon 5 and arrest the command staff. Clark's bombing of Mars triggers the secession of EA colonies at Proxima 3 and Orion 7. Sheridan supports them by declaring Babylon 5 as an independent state until Clark is removed from office. Sheridan's forces narrowly defeat the first wave of the EarthForce fleet. EA reinforcements arrive and just as Sheridan is about to surrender, Delenn arrives with a fleet of Minbari ships forcing the EA ships to withdraw.

"It was the most special effects intensive

Ivanova's ship tumbles toward an EarthForce cruiser as Babylon 5 declares itself independent and finds itself under attack in "Severed Dreams."



episode we've done to date and I think probably the most anyone has ever done," said Straczynski. "When the script first came out George Johnsen, our co-producer, called me up and said, 'This is the best show we're ever going to deliver. Are you nuts?'" I said, 'I know we can do it and we'll just work it out.' It came down that we delivered the episode two hours before it had to go through the [satellite]."

"I know that Delenn is fated for another, and I have accepted that, in my heart. But I have vowed to stay at her side through all things for as long as I live."
—Lennier to Marcus

CEREMONIES OF LIGHT AND DARK

★★★ 1/2

4/11/1996. #311 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by John C. Flinn, III.

Delenn asks the command staff to join in the Nafak'Cha, a rebirth ceremony where they give up something valued. Nightwatch saboteurs led by Boggs (Don Stroud) and Sniper (Paul Perri), a man with a pathological hatred of Minbari, kidnap Delenn and Lenann (Kim Strauss), the commander of the Minbari fleet shielding the station. If they can force the Minbari to leave, EarthForce can take over the station. Marcus discovers where the hostages are being held. During the rescue, a knife thrown at Sheridan injures Delenn instead. As Delenn recovers in Medlab, the ceremony is completed, each person offering a secret and their Earth Alliance uniforms. Londo meets with Lord Refa urging him to break his pact with Morden and tend to the Empire's defenses. When Refa refuses, Londo doses him with a two-component poison promising he'll be safe from part two if he co-operates.

With this episode, new black/gray costumes are introduced to signify that Babylon 5 is independent, no longer tied to Earth Force. "I thought the new wardrobe was very cool," said John Copeland. "It gave a grittier feel to our cast. I was involved, but Ann Bruce-Aling, our wardrobe designer, really deserves most of the credit. Ann made just a wonderful contribution to the series in the evolution of the look."



Londo informs Lord Refa that he has just been poisoned as he converses with him at a table in the bar in "Ceremonies of Light and Dark."

"Oh, I heard a new joke. Hehehaahhh. What is more dangerous than a locked room full of angry Narns?"

"Heh, I don't know. What is more dangerous than a locked room full of angry Narns?"
"One angry Narn with a key."

—Centauri Minister and Vir

SIC TRANSIT VIR

★★★

4/18/1996. #313 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Jesus Salvador Trevino.

Vir's uncle surprises him by arranging his marriage to a beautiful Centauri woman named

her return to the series, was her first major scene with the command staff in Sheridan's office. Lyta talked about what became of her after the events of "The Gathering," and how she became obsessed with the Vorlons, including a desire to travel to Vorlon space at any cost. "All I did was talk!" chuckled Tallman. "I talked and talked, blah, blah, blah! 'Oh, really? What happened?' And then I say, 'Blah, blah, blah!' And Jerry goes, 'HMM! I can't believe that!' And Claudia would raise her eyebrow. 'Blah, blah, blah!' And of course, when you're shooting this, you need closeups of everybody, so I have to do the whole scene over again. It was a lot of words for me to be jumping into for the first time in a long time. I was nervous. I didn't know anyone except Jerry [Doyle]."

"Everyone was wonderful. I knew John Flinn, our director of photography. They were so much fun. They made me welcome right away. A great group with great chemistry."

At the end of the season, Larry DiTillio did not renew his B5 contract. "I didn't leave the show, I was asked to go," explained DiTillio. "And I said, 'Okay!' I cleaned out my desk and left, and found another show. Obviously, Joe didn't like my writing. I was told Warner Bros didn't like my writing, so it's always best to put it on some faceless entity. I'm sorry they didn't, but that's okay."

Looking over the season, DiTillio said that he was pleased, however short the tenure, of having worked on the series. "I loved BABYLON 5. I had a ball there. I have no regrets. I made a lot of friends."

"The hour format is not really my forte. I'm really a great half-hour writer. The hour format seems too long for me. I'd like to write either half-hours or movies. Either really long or really short. The hour format is half-way in between all those things. The difference between Joe and me is that Joe likes to write about the captains and kings. I like to write about the foot soldiers. That is really a basic difference between us. I love character actors. I don't really like the hero. I like his sidekick."

DiTillio also remarked that he was sorry

"I didn't leave the show I was asked to go. Obviously, Joe didn't like my writing. I was told Warner Bros didn't like it. I'm sorry they didn't but that's okay."

—Writer Larry DiTillio—



Story editor Larry DiTillio left at the end of the second season when series creator Joe Straczynski began writing everything.

that Thompson wanted to leave the show. "I liked her quite a bit. And I do like Patricia Tallman. I thought she was terrific, she really played a good one."

"I did a lot of world building on BABYLON 5, especially during the first year, and somewhat in the second year. There were a lot of things that had to be filled-in; stuff that was on the screen, but that the audience was not going to be aware of. There wasn't really much of a world set up in the bible, because Joe was playing his cards pretty close to his vest. I did quite a lot of that on my own. I had done a star map of the B5 galaxy, but I don't know what happened to it. It went to the art department, and that's the last I ever heard of it. It may surface now that there is a role-playing game. It showed where the Centauri, the Narn, and everybody were. My theory was that if we were going to fight this war out, we needed to know where every-

body's position was. That's the first thing you need to know in a war."

"I also did a big alien guide. Not a guide to the five main races, Joe was dealing with that, and if there was any background material on them, I've never seen it. But there is background material on all of the League of Non-aligned Worlds."

There was a lot of value to the show's guest star roster, said DiTillio. "I think we get a lot of good actors, because there is good writing on the show. The actors look at the script and say this is a cut above what they're usually asked to do on television. I think we get the good actors that way. I don't think there is a better way to get actors like Paul Winfield unless they have a good script to work from. In most cases everybody has worked out, like David Warner in 'Grail' did a good job."

"And Turhan Bey [from 'Coming of Shadows'] was a wonderful old character. When I had to give the emperor a name, I said, 'Let's give him Turhan's name.'"

"We had everything an actor could want. We had good, solid character emotional relationships, and spaceships blowing the shit out of each other. What more do you want?" □

ANDREA THOMPSON

Living up to the promise that no one aboard B5 is what they seem.

By David Bassom

Psi Corps commercial telepath Talia Winters certainly lived up to the promise that "no-one aboard Babylon 5 is what they appear to be." During her two-year stay aboard the Earth Alliance space station, Talia was given an undefined "gift" involving telekinetic powers by rogue telepath Jason Ironheart, had her mind scanned by a strange associate of the enigmatic Vorlon Ambassador Kosh, and developed a romantic relationship with her one-time sparring partner, Commander Susan Ivanova, before being exposed as a unwitting Psi Corps spy!

Noted Thompson, "There were a lot of things that came as a surprise to me, and a lot of things I still don't understand properly. Take, for instance, my scenes with Kosh in 'Deathwalker'; they were very oblique and really difficult to figure out."

Thompson made her debut as Talia Winters in BABYLON 5's first season premiere "Midnight On The Firing Line." In the process, she replaced Patricia Tallman, who had played the station's resident telepath Lyta Alexander in the show's feature-length pilot, "The Gathering."

"Somebody at Warner Bros didn't want Pat on the show—I really don't know the inside story—so the character of Talia Winters was created to take her place," recalled Thompson. "When my agent got the call about the role, I really wanted to do it because I had always loved science fiction and I thought the show had a lot of potential. I also liked the idea of playing a vulnerable character; I've often auditioned for roles in the past and been told that 'The producers loved you but they didn't think you were vul-

nerable enough!'"

Before signing her contract, Thompson discussed the offer with her boyfriend and future-husband Jerry Doyle, who by sheer coincidence happened to play one of BABYLON 5's leading characters, Security Chief Michael Garibaldi. While many couples would balk at the prospect of living and working together, Thompson found the idea irresistible. "Jerry and I loved working together and never got tired of each other," she enthused. "It was just wonderful to work together on BABYLON 5!" Sadly, the couple later divorced and they have a son as a result of their union.

The actress cited Talia Winters as one of the most interesting characters she has ever played and particularly enjoyed working on episodes which challenged Talia's beliefs and assumptions about the universe around her. "I loved doing 'A Race Through Dark Places' and 'Mind War,'" she said. "They both explored Talia's realization that she had been betrayed by the Psi Corps and were both terrific episodes, in terms of the writing and the featured actors. William Allan Young [who played Jason Ironheart] and Gianni

Thompson, Michael O'Hare and Peter Jurasik. Noted the actress of the scripts, "A lot came as a surprise to me, and a lot of things I still don't understand."



Thompson played Psi Corps telepath Talia Winters, while married to Garibaldi's Jerry Doyle. Thompson left the show at the end of season two.

Loffler [the mysterious leader of the underground railroad of unlicensed telepaths] were both amazing to work with."

Unfortunately, Thompson's assignment to BABYLON 5 was shortlived. The actress gradually became dissatisfied with the size of her role in the series and began to clash with Joe Straczynski and the show's other producers during its second season. "There was a big discrepancy between what was promised to me and was actually delivered to me in terms of screen time and exploration of the character," she stated. "I had been promised around 13 episodes, and only did seven. I guess that due to the size of the cast on the show, they thought they were going to use me more than they did."

"As a result, I often found myself sitting around for two or three months at a time without working. And when I didn't work, I wasn't being paid! I tried to talk to the producers about it, and they basically said, 'Too bad' and wouldn't release me to do other work in-between my episodes. I then said, 'Okay, see you later.' I certainly didn't leave BABYLON 5 with any kind of bad feelings; I made it clear when I left that it was nothing personal, just a question of business and that I needed to go and pursue new work. They very graciously let me go." □

Lindisty (Carmen Thomas). Vir falls in love with her. Narns try to kill them, but Vir is not the target. He discovers that Lindisty's father was an executioner on Narn after the war. Lindisty regards Narns as non-sentient and was involved in the killings. Ivanova learns from the station's records the Narns whom Vir previously claimed to be helping, have apparently all been killed. In Londo's presence, Vir admits he's been smuggling Narn refugees to safety by faking their death certificates through his position on Minbar. Londo covers up the incident, but reprimands Vir by revoking his appointment to Minbar. Lindisty returns to Centuri Prime vowing to return and marry Vir.

Actor Stephen Furst delivers one of his most dramatic performances for the series. It's a strong contrast from Furst's reputation as a comedic actor, also displayed throughout the series. "People had a perception that Stephen could only do comedy, and being so good at comedy coming out of things like *ANIMAL HOUSE*," remarked Peter Jurasik. "He had to sort of overcome that in a show like *ST. ELSEWHERE*. By the time he got to *BABYLON 5* he was used to playing both sides of the coin. It was necessary, because of the nature of the role, that Vir be outrageously comedic at first as we know, in the first season. As Londo moved over to the center, over to the dramatic side, that area needed to be balanced out. That's when Vir was brought in and Stephen filled that. For the longest time he really was just doing a lot of comedy. But even though he had it within him to make the transition, he's done it so many times in his career, to the actor that you saw in 'Sic Transit Vir.' Stephen built the character from the bottom up."



Carmen Thomas as Lindisty, Vir's unabashedly racist Centauri betrothed, talking about the Narn as if they were insects, in "Sic Transit Vir."

"One of Mordred's knights saw an adder about to strike, so he drew his sword. The others saw it, and the killing began. A quarter of a million men and women...dead on the battlefield at Camlann."

—Arthur

A LATE DELIVERY FROM AVALON ★★★

4/16/1996. #312 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Michael Vejar.

On the 15th anniversary of the Earth-Minbari war, a man (Michael York) arrives at Babylon 5. Haunted by recurring dreams of death and destruction, he wears chain-mail armor, brandishes the sword Excalibur and claims to be the lost Arthur, King of the Britons. His chivalry attracts G'Kar's attention and the two become friends. Marcus is intrigued, but Franklin is concerned about his mental health. A DNA test proves the man is David MacIntyre, a gunnery sergeant aboard the Prometheus, the ship that started the Earth-Minbari war. When told, Arthur becomes catatonic. Franklin and Marcus cure him by fulfilling the legend, returning Excalibur (symbolic of his guilt) to the Lady of the Lake. Delenn accepts the sword and forgives him. "Arthur" leaves B5 to help organize the Narn resistance.

PATRICIA TALLMAN

Telepath Lyta Alexander from the pilot returned second season.

By David Bassom

It took four years, but Patricia Tallman finally claimed her rightful place as a regular member of *BABYLON 5*'s ensemble cast. The actress, who first played Psi Corps telepath Lyta Alexander in the show's feature-length pilot, "The Gathering," went on to guest-star in three episodes of the weekly series before being invited to join the cast on a more permanent basis.

"It was incredible to be a regular member of *BABYLON 5*'s cast," she said. "I'm very grateful for all the support I've received from the show's fans and I'm glad the character was received so well. I'm also indebted to Joe [Straczynski, series creator/executive producer] for making this happen."

BABYLON 5 is hardly Patricia Tallman's first foray into the science fiction/fantasy genre. She made her film debut in 1981 with the cult fantasy movie *KNIGHTRIDERS* and subsequently featured in the likes of *JURASSIC PARK*, *EVIL DEAD III: ARMY OF DARKNESS*, *MONKEY SHINES* and *TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE*. Tallman has also worked, both as an actress and a stuntwoman, in the three *STAR TREK* spin-off shows, *THE NEXT GENERATION*, *DEEP SPACE NINE* and *VOYAGER*, and can be seen in the seventh movie, *GENERATIONS*. Her big break came in 1990, when she starred as zombie-zapping Barbara in George Romero's update of *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*.

On the strength of her work in Romero's



Tallman as Alexander in B5's two hour TV movie pilot, "The Gathering." Studio politics kept her off the series.

film, Tallman was invited to read for the role of *BABYLON 5*'s telepath-for-hire, Lyta Alexander, at the beginning of 1992 and was extremely excited by the prospect of playing a leading role in the series. "I really enjoy the science fiction genre and always have," she said. "When I read the script for *BABYLON 5*'s pilot ['The Gathering'], I just thought it was wonderful. I loved the character; I liked the way Lyta was human but at the same time is enhanced, thanks to her telepathic abilities. I really thought there was so much that could be done with her. And I really liked hearing about how Joe had a five-year story arc for the show,

which nearly everyone thought was a crazy idea at the time!"

Prior to stepping foot on the Earth Alliance space station, Tallman read numerous science fiction novels and studied several purported real-life cases to understand the psyche of a mind-reader. And she soon became convinced that extrasensory perception is an existing phenomenon. "I think everybody's a bit telepathic," she stated. "There are instances where mothers call their children when they just know they're in trouble, and there's no explanation about how they knew."

"The Gathering" was shot within a tight four-week schedule during the Summer of 1992. For Tallman, it was a fantastic experience. "Everything was new and exciting, and there was a lot of energy on the set," she explained. "The cast and crew were all wonderful and we had a blast."



Changing of the Vorlon Guard: Tallman as Alexander and Jeffrey Willerth as Kosh's replacement Ulkesh Narenek, filming third season's "Walkabout," as the new Vorlan Ambassador blames Lyta for Kosh's death.

When BABYLON 5 was picked up as a weekly series the following year, Tallman was shocked to learn that she would not be re-joining the show's cast, reportedly at the behest of Warner Bros. "Doing the pilot, waiting a year for it to be announced as a series and then losing the series was devastating," she admitted. "It's a typical Hollywood story, and the only thing I can say about it is that it wasn't my choice to leave the show."

Fortunately, Lyta Alexander's reassignment was only temporary. Joe Straczynski always hoped that she would return to the series at some point in the future and achieved his ambition with the second season installment "Divided Loyalties," in which the rogue telepath visits Babylon 5 to expose her successor as an unwitting Psi Corps Spy.

"Joe always felt bad about what happened and he always wanted to find a way to bring me back," she explained. "Luckily, the storyline with Lyta and Kosh worked out for him; it allowed him to send her back to Earth with a pretty believable explanation. Then, when Andrea Thompson wanted to leave, there was kind of a gap that I could fill—they needed a telepath. So it worked out really well. I got lucky for a change!"

The actress was both nervous and excited about reprising the role of Lyta Alexander, but is pleased to report that the cast and crew soon made her feel at ease. "Everyone was very, very kind to me and have been ever since. The cast were just awesome." Following "Divided

“Doing a pilot and losing the series was devastating. It’s a typical Hollywood story, the only thing I can say is that it wasn’t my choice to leave the show.”

—Actress Patricia Tallman—

Loyalties," Tallman was featured in two third season outings, "Passing Through Gethsemane" and "Walkabout," which paved the way for her to become a regular member of BABYLON 5's cast.

During BABYLON 5, Tallman was free to pursue other work to occupy her weeks off. Consequently, she has continued to do stuntwork on the *STAR TREK* shows.

"There's really no comparison between working on *STAR TREK* and *BABYLON 5*," she mused. "STAR TREK is on the Paramount lot, so the atmosphere is much more formal and the stars have big trailers and stay in them, while the rest of us have to go out and buy our own lunches! On *BABYLON 5*, everyone's equal. We all have the same sized trailers, we all hang out together and we all eat lunch together. It's completely different.

"I also think there's a lot more pressure on *STAR TREK*, where you have all the suits from Paramount hanging around all the time. The Warner Bros. guys didn't visit *BABYLON 5* a lot. We're out there on our own!"

You don't have to be telepathic to know that Patricia Tallman enjoyed life as a permanent resident aboard *BABYLON 5*. "I really am grateful for this wonderful opportunity and I hope that I can use it to move away from stuntwork, towards acting," she said. "I always dreamed of being an actress and now that I have my son, Julian, I don't feel like I have to risk my life for my job! So if I become able to make a living out of my acting career, I'll be a very happy camper." □

For Andreas Katsulas, having an opportunity to work with Michael York was a joy. "I'm a fan of his!" he said. "He has such an incredible presence and charisma. I was sort of in awe of him so how do you play with someone you'd rather just sit back and watch at work? I had some wonderful drunk scenes with him. He and I are sitting at a table in the Downbelow at a seedy bar and 'knocking back a few.' I just found it was delightful to do it all. Just so happy to work with him."

To achieve the surrealism conveyed in the black and white dream sequences throughout the episode when "King Arthur" walked through a corridor of doors, with the space battle echoes surrounding him, that was an idea by director Michael Vejar. On rare occasions a director will suggest a new idea to him, said Straczynski. "Mike came to me and said 'there's this great technique that I want to use which you may not have heard of. What you do is you shoot the episode over cranks, it should be at twice the regular speed, and then you pull out every third frame, which brings it down to the regular speed. But it gives it a very dream-like look.' And I said, 'I don't know what you're talking about.' He brought in a piece of film from something else that he did where he had used a similar technique in colors—it was black and white for this one—and he said, 'This is what I have in mind.' Once I saw what he was talking about I got it. I said, 'Go with God; go and do.' And it's a great effect."



Michael York as would-be King Arthur, regaling G'Kar with tales of chivalry at a round table in the station's bar in "A Late Delivery From Avalon."

"You know the real reason you don't like me, Commander? It's the jealousy of evolution. Normals like you are obsolete. The future belongs to telepaths...and I intend to make sure that future happens. One way or another."

—Bester to Ivanova

SHIP OF TEARS

★★★

5/2/1996. #314 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Michael Vejar.

Bester tries to join Sheridan's alliance because the Shadows have infiltrated and threaten Psi Corps. He warns them of a ship full of weapons components being sent to the Shadows. The White Star intercepts the ship destroying its escort, but then finds itself facing a Shadow vessel, which inexplicably doesn't attack. G'Kar demands a place in Sheridan's War Council. The weapons turn out to be one hundred cryo-suspended telepaths with cyber-cranial implants. Carolyn (Joan McMurtry), Bester's lover is among them and when she's revived, attempts to merge with the station's systems. Scanning her, Bester discovers that she and the others are intended to be merged with Shadow ships. Garibaldi realizes that telepaths are a threat to the Shadows who use their captives to counter other telepaths. G'Kar is accepted into the alliance as Bester returns to Earth to work against the aliens from within the Corps.

"One thing I think is very important is that the first two times Bester came to the station he got bopped and lost," said Joe Straczynski. "My sense

SEASON THREE

Heroes are tested, villains revealed, confronting personal demons and enemies within and without.

By Frank Garcia
and Robert T. Garcia

Traditionally, the middle of a story is when the author heats up the plotting and starts pulling the triggers on events and conflicts that have been foreshadowed from the beginning. Heroes are tested, villains are revealed and by the end of the season, a showdown between good and evil takes place. Exposition, for the most part, is pushed aside for the action, the ongoing plot and character-evolving dramas.

In this season Joe Straczynski proved that stability was a myth in the B5 universe. Almost everyone had to wrest with their personal demons or were being forced to confront enemies from within and without the station.

"At some point you hit a point of critical mass where the universe changes," quipped Straczynski, who invented an analogy to describe the radical change that he installed during this season. "If one day the Federa-

tion sold out to the Klingon Empire and merged with it and suddenly the Enterprise became a Klingon ship and stayed that way most of the season, that's the magnitude we're talking."

With the opening episode, "Matters of Honor," a new player was introduced into the B5 tapestry. Marcus Cole (Jason Carter), a roguish dark-haired Ranger of British descent joined the team on Babylon 5. Effectively, he filled the gap for other characters no longer with the show; Andrea Thompson and Robert Rusler, who was second season's Warren Keffer, a Starfury pilot killed in "Fall of Night" from an encounter with a Shadow vessel.

"Season three really put us in the thick of the thing. It's really dense!" said Andreas Katsulas, who played G'Kar. Unlike a few other actors like Michael O'Hare and Mira Furlan, who were privy to what was in store for their characters, Katsulas was much more comfortable with playing the moment, and only the moment. "When people start

talking about what's going to happen I run away. I don't want to know it. In the first year if Joe had said, 'I'm going to start you out as a bad guy. This G'Kar is a real stinker and then around the middle of season two and into season three he's going to go through a change and become a good guy,' I would have started playing the end already in the first [season]—so it's good not to know. Not to anticipate. The worst thing, if you're doing King Lear, is to start playing tragedy in the first scene because where do you have to go?

"I look forward to it much as, I suppose, the fans look forward to the next episode. I look forward to the next script because I don't know what's lurking behind that door. It's fun."

"Once the plot started to push forward, there was a lot that Joe had to do in terms of moving the storyline forward," said Peter Jurasik. For Londo, he said, "The darkness came over the character. It was a really fun thing to watch Joe isolate Londo more and more. Once he had given up his soul, he had almost no one to relate to. No one except Vir. He was walking on a gangplank out to nowhere. That caused the character to turn inward. And that's why people were openly attracted to what's inside of Londo too. He became not just a character that moved through the story but [through] his own inner trip and what was going on in his heart."

But the major arc stories did not mean the so-called "episodic" tales were any less interesting. Topically, "Passing Through Gethsemane" addressed two very different subjects, religion and capital punishment, and slammed them together into one story. When Brother Edward, a monk, began hallucinating about death and blood, he was horrified to discover that he was previously a serial killer and the "mindwipe" technology reformed him as a religious monk in order to do penance for his misdeeds.

"In a way, it's certainly more constructive than keeping them locked up," said Patricia Tallman, referring to the technologi-

Draal (John Schuck) puts the Great Machine of Epsilon 3 at Sheridan's disposal to search for the First Ones in "Voices of Authority," an intriguing plot thread never again picked up by Straczynski or the series.





Sheridan (Bruce Boxleitner) with B5 ambassadors (clockwise) Londo (Peter Jurasik), Kosh, Londo's aide, Vir (Stephen Furst), G'Kar (Andreas Katsulas), Minbari aide Lennier (Bill Mumy), and Mira Furlan as Delenn.

cal invention of "mindwiping" and it's application of reformatting the brains of serial killers and criminals. "We don't want to murder them—doing exactly what they did. It's a psychological, spiritual and religious dilemma isn't it?"

How would society really deal with our darkest selves if we had this technology? "Would that be a good end result if we start working towards that now?" asked Tallman. I don't really have an answer. It's a really good thing as long as you don't freeze up, dealing with the questions and never try to find an answer. It's constantly defining our integrity—making decisions."

An important meeting for Londo Mollari gave Peter Jurasik and everyone filming the show an opportunity to receive a very special guest star. Majel Barrett Roddenberry, of STAR TREK fame, arrived aboard the station as Lady Morella, the late Emperor Turhan's widow. Londo asked for the meeting to receive a prophetic reading from her to determine the ultimate course of his future.

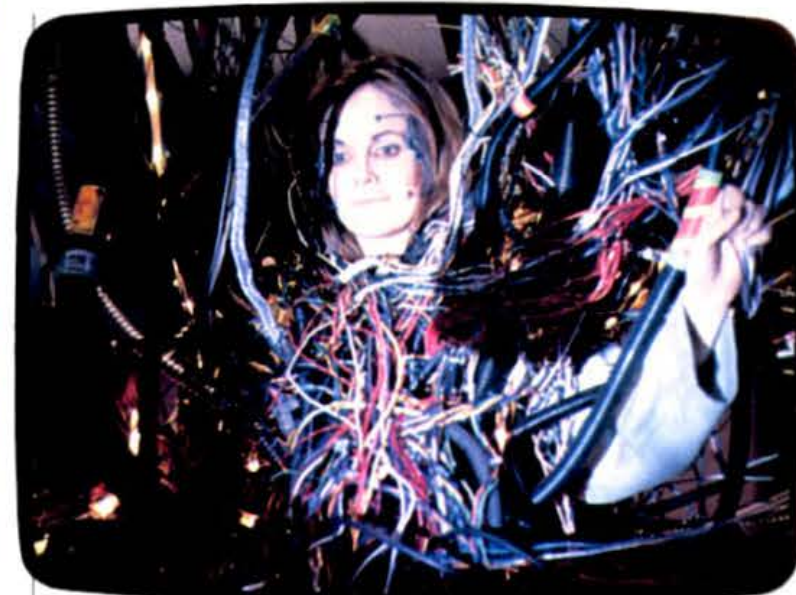
After accidentally touching both Londo and Vir, Morella presented her vision: "You have a chance few others will ever have, Mollari," intoned Morella. "You still have three opportunities to avoid the fire that waits for you at the end of your journey. You've already wasted two others. You must save the eye that does not see. You

must not kill the one who is already dead. And at the last, you must surrender yourself to your greatest fear, knowing that it will destroy you. Now, if you fail all the others, that is your final chance for redemption."

Dark and ominous, it was necessary for the series to reach its conclusion to fully understand Lady Morella's cryptic words. With the entire story now completed, Jurasik decoded the prophecy. "One refers to Sheridan and one refers to G'Kar," said Jurasik. "Save the eye that cannot see." It's poetic. And it has its connotations built in. It refers to G'Kar because it's a literal eye that is lost. Sheridan is the second one. Londo has an opportunity in 'War Without End,' sitting on the throne, to kill Sheridan. But he lets Sheridan escape. It's practically his last act." The reason that the second prophecy refers to Sheridan is because he "died" in the yet-to-come events of third season's finale "Z'ha'dum."

In the final entrail, "Surrender yourself to your greatest fear" is a clear reference to the events of fifth season's "The Fall of Centauri Prime," where Londo willingly accepted a parasite "Keeper" to save the planet from certain destruction because the blackmailing Drakh, who worked for the Shadows, had hidden fusion bombs scattered across the world.

There is also another interpretation to



Carolyn (Joan McCurtrey), Bester's lover, is found among the cryo-suspended telepaths who are serving the Shadows in "Ship of Tears."

is the third time he appears he either has to be right or he has to win. Because otherwise, we lose the strength of the character."

This is the first appearance of the War Room when Delenn brings G'Kar inside to join them. To create this set, the production disassembled the Casino on Stage C.

Trivia: Bester's first name is Alfred, named after the late, great SF novelist who wrote the classic Telepath story, "The Demolished Man."

"You said you wanted to teach me to fight legends; well, you're a legend too and I'm not going away until you agree."

—Sheridan to Kosh

INTERLUDES AND EXAMINATIONS

★★★ 1/2

5/9/1996. #315 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Jesus Salvador Trevino.

The Shadows are attacking the Brakiri and other Rim worlds. Sheridan and Delenn ask the League of Non-Aligned Worlds to join in their defense, but the other races are reluctant without assurance they can win. Sheridan then demands that the Vorlons make a real contribution to the war. He ignores Kosh's warnings of a heavy price. A Vorlon fleet ambushes the Shadows stopping their advance, but Morden and his associates kill Kosh in retaliation. Before Kosh dies in the struggle, he enters Sheridan's mind leaving him a final message. Londo's lover Adira Tyree, en route to B5, is poisoned by Morden who regains Mollari's trust by convincing him Lord Refa was responsible. Franklin recognizes his Stim addiction and resigns his position. The Vorlons request Kosh's remains and personal property be placed in his transport and sent into the nearest sun.

On the subject of killing the Vorlon ambassador Kosh, Straczynski noted, "If ever you've written a novel you kind of know where

Vorlon Ambassador Kosh (Jeffrey Willerth) is killed in battle with the Shadows, a plot surprise even to Straczynski as he scripted the episode.



you want to go and what the high points are that you want to hit, but you have to be open to changes. These characters often will surprise you. I was writing 'Interludes and Examinations,' which took a completely different turn than I had expected going in. While writing it one of the characters said, 'You're missing a bet.' I said, 'What do you mean, I'm missing a bet?' I have these conversations with my characters sometimes, they're very real to me. And he said, 'Follow me.' So, okay, 'You go, I'll follow.' And I followed the story and I kept writing it and I said, 'I think I know where you're going with this.' He said, 'Keep going.' And I did and it was a major, major event which I hadn't planned anywhere in the Bible, but when it happened made absolute, 100% clear sense."

Reflecting on this pivotal moment, of Kosh's death, actor Jeffrey Willerth remarked, "I was pretty pleased that I had a chance to play the character. I knew that character would go down in B5 history, that he would always have that popularity with the fans."

"All my life, I've had doubts about who I am, where I belonged. Now, I'm like the arrow that springs from the bow. No hesitations, no doubts. The path is clear."

—Sinclair

WAR WITHOUT END (PT. 1)

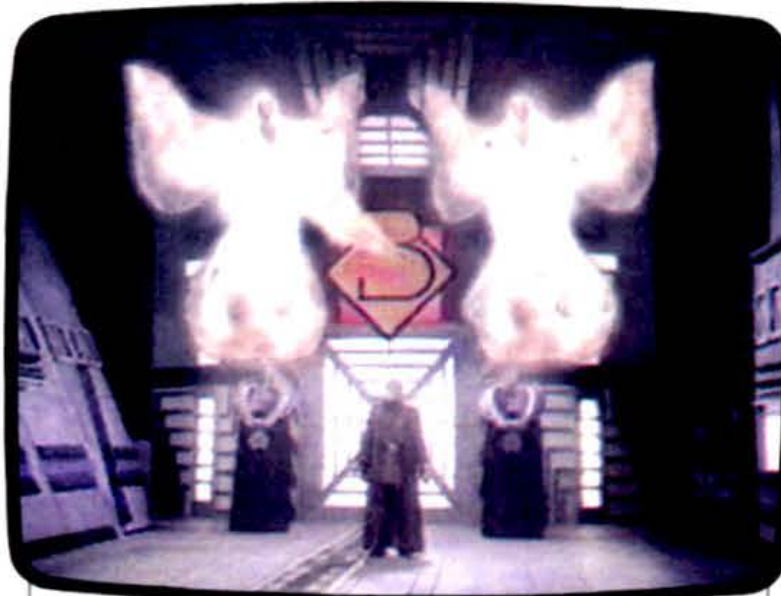
★★★

5/16/1996. #316 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Michael Vejar.

Six years ago before it became operational, Babylon 4 vanished from Sector 14. It returned briefly two years ago. (see "Babylon Squared") Sinclair, now Entil 'zah, leader of the Rangers, and Delenn each receive a mysterious thousand-year old letter. Sinclair joins B5's command staff and Delenn aboard the White Star. Delenn shows two recordings of the last Shadow War. The turning point of the war a thousand years ago was Babylon 4's sudden appearance. It replaced the destroyed Minbari star base. The second recording shows the White Star stopping a Shadow allies' fusion bomb attack on Babylon 4 prior to its disappearance. The White Star must go back six years. Draal's helper Zathras (Tim Choate) joins them, and using the Great Machine's energies, a temporal rift is opened for the ship. Sheridan's time stabilizer is damaged, throwing him 17 years into the future. He finds a devastated Centauri Prime where Emperor Mollari tells him that he defeated the Shadows, but not their servants. The Centauri have suffered for Sheridan's victory, so Londo orders his execution. Back at B4, the others board it and prepare for its trip through time.

"Production-wise it was terrific," said Joe Straczynski. "Where 'Severed Dreams' had our most extensive CGI requirements, this one had our most extensive production on-set requirements. Set changes, physical effects, practical effects, different locations, all that kind of stuff. It was hideously difficult in that respect. It's a very

Ivanova, bleeding and calling for help because Babylon 5 is being destroyed in a flash-forward SOS from the future she receives from herself.



Sinclair transformed, flanked by Vorlon encounter suits with two Angels of Light floating above, waiting to greet the Minbari a thousand years ago.

handsome episode. Very strong. It just works really well and we're happy with that episode. It covers almost 1,100 years of history, so the scale was just huge.

"We wanted Mike to do the two-parter because there was no one else we could think of who would be able to pull that one off the way it had to be done. We wanted him for that one because it really requires a certain touch that he has with the characters and with the camera."

"You are The One who was. You are The One who is. You are The One who will be."

—Zathras, to Sinclair, Delenn and Sheridan

WAR WITHOUT END (PT. 2)

★★★★

5/23/1996. #317 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Michael Vejar.

Sheridan is thrown into a cell where he finds Delenn, his future wife. Emperor Mollari has sentenced them to death for failing to protect Centauri Prime. She tells Sheridan that their son David has escaped. Sheridan says he has been projected into this body from the past. Delenn warns him not to go to Z'ha'dum. The drunken Emperor arranges their escape. He reveals that his actions are controlled by the Keeper, an alien parasite. Before the alcohol-disabled Keeper wakes, Londo gets G'Kar to choke him, and they strangle each other to death. Ivanova fakes a hull breach to get B4's skeleton crew to evacuate. Station commander Major Krantz (Kent Broadhurst) accidentally moves B4 four years into the future. Sinclair, while he's attaching a locator beacon, is caught outside and is aged by his second exposure to the time field. Zathras is captured by the Sinclair and Garibaldi of two years ago. Sheridan, still unstuck-in-time, materializes on B4 where Zathras manages to pass a time stabilizer to him. Sinclair and Zathras remain aboard B4 as it goes back 1,000 years. The others aboard the White Star, return through the rift to the present. Using the Triluminary device, Sinclair transforms into the Minbari leader Valen and accompanied by two Vorlons, brings B4 to the Minbari to take command of the war.

For this episode, costume designer Anne Bruce-Aling was startled to discover that she had to recreate certain costumes that were previously used in the first season's "Babylon Squared." She was alarmed because these costumes were no longer on hand. "We had to pull out of our little bag of tricks [to recreate] two things that we had done as sort of throw-away kind of things," she said. "One of them was a spacesuit that we actually had rented. Who knows where it was, but it wasn't where we returned it, so we had to have two built! Delenn has to wear the spacesuit too."

"We had no idea that was coming back! And then there was Zathras, which appeared in that same episode who was a funky kind of Hobbit character."

"With a character like Zathras you had about 18 different pieces of the body. When I found out that that character was coming back, I went, 'Oh

my God!' Because in the episode you got close enough to see the detail and a lot of it was woven. One of it was a woven Guatemalan kind of scarf that was pieced with something else. We had to go out and buy fabrics, paint and dye them to replicate this. It took weeks. My dyer/painter worked with Polaroids. We had enough close shots on him to match [the recreation with the original costume]. We'd look at the footage, and go, 'Okay, no, that doesn't go there, that goes there, this goes there.' Once [actor Tim Choate] put his costume on and we went through the fitting he'd go, 'Oh, yeah, now I remember. Okay, this is how I walked, huh?' It's like the costume had a hump on it and these raccoon tails and all kinds of different Yak hair and stuff on it. That was a moment for that season that I remembered as being the most hairy!"

"Despite their strength the Vorlons are delicate people. They do not react well to change, and they are not very forgiving of mistakes. It's been a long time since one of them died, they are taking it pretty hard."

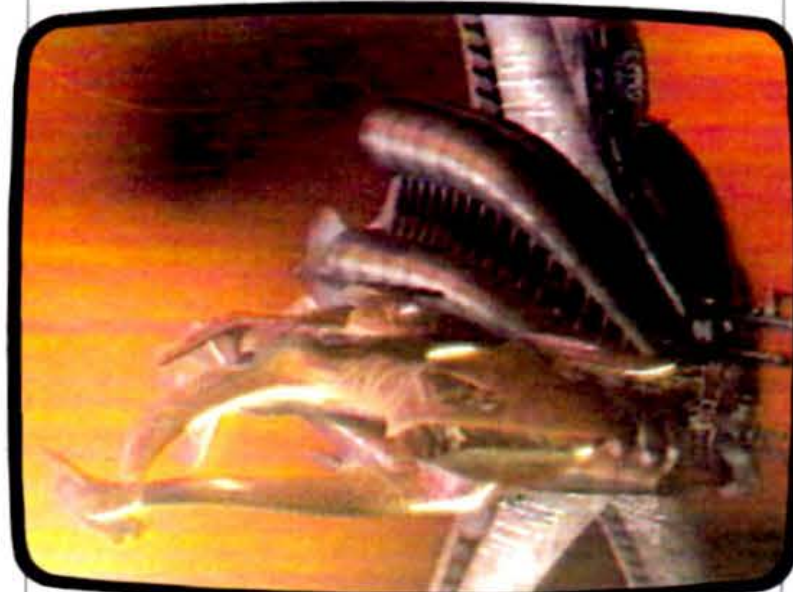
—Lyta

WALKABOUT

★★★

09/30/1996. #318 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Kevin Cremin.

Ulkes Narenek, Kosh's replacement, arrives and insists on being called "Kosh." He blames Lyta Alexander, who was away at the time, for Kosh's death. Sheridan suggests they test Garibaldi's theory that Lyta can disable a Shadow ship. Backed by three Minbari telepaths on a Minbari cruiser, the White Star engages a Shadow vessel and proves that Lyta can telepathically cripple it. During the battle, she learns the Shadows killed Kosh. Drained of energy and with jump engines offline, the White Star is defenseless as more Shadows arrive. The Minbari telepaths can hold three of the four Shadow vessels off, but only the arrival of a Narn cruiser Ja'dok and League ships saves them. Lyta suspects that part of Kosh may be in Sheridan. Facing his Stims addiction, Franklin begins a "walkabout" through the station and meets the beautiful, but terminally ill, Cailyn (Erica Gimpel) a nightclub singer with whom he spends the night.



The White Star reconnoiters with a Minbari Cruiser in "Walkabout," testing Lyta Alexander's telepathic ability to disable a Shadow ship.

In a rare titles mistake, Patricia Tallman's first name was misspelled in this episode which startled the actress, "I was devastated!" said Tallman. "I couldn't believe it. That's just indicative of some of the things going on!"

"I was really mostly impressed with Rick Biggs' performance. I thought he did an incredible job in that episode. I love Dr. Franklin and the things he was doing. He's just amazing."

"For Lyta, it was more of the same, it was giving me something so I could be more effective, which was terrific. That's my only frustration with Lyta, she's not more pro-active."

“They were in need of a little media attention. I think they thought that having Bruce’s wife come and play his wife would be a great way to get some ratings.”

—Actress Melissa Gilbert—



Sheridan (Bruce Boxleitner) with wife Anna (Melissa Gilbert), Boxleitner’s real-life spouse, in season ender “Z’ha’dum.”

the second entrail. If written out as, “Save the I that does not see” is not just G’Kar who had his left eye plucked from him by Emperor Cartagia in the fourth season. It can also be construed that the “I” refers to Londo. The ambassador was blinded by darkness, hence, Londo must save himself. “That’s a great one!” agreed Jurasik. “I’m certainly bowed to any interpretation. I love that capital ‘I.’ ‘Save the ‘I’ that cannot see.’ That applies wonderfully to Londo.”

Referring to fellow cast and crewmembers working on the series, Jurasik explained that even they were mystified by the show’s plots and character beats. “We’ve all battered around at lunch about where JMS meant the story to go, what he had in mind. He would sit enigmatically down at the end of the lunch table and smile, as we chatted about it. Only he knew!”

In a pivotal story that propelled the BABYLON 5 universe into a season and a half long story arc, Joe Straczynski did something that STAR TREK would never have done. If this were a traditional, typical Hollywood space SF series, with producers who were not JMS and John Copeland, quite likely we would not have seen this episode. In the Hugo-award winning “Severed Dreams,” Straczynski altered the fabric of the series’ premise.

When EarthForce tried an assault against Babylon 5, Sheridan polled his staff, “Do we fight or surrender?” After an unanimous agreement to take a stand, the station was besieged by three Clark-loyal EA battlecruisers with orders to take command of B5. Sheridan declared that B5 was seceding from the Earth Alliance and would become independent.

Bruce Boxleitner felt strongly that only Sheridan could have fought this fight and not Sinclair. “There was no war at the time Sinclair was on B5,” he said. “That’s why he couldn’t really have led the same fight as Sheridan. Sheridan is a soldier. Sinclair is more in the spiritual aspect of the battle, behind-the-scenes, much more in the great moral conflict. Sheridan doesn’t have a lot of time for that. He knows the basics of the

right and the wrong. Joe [Straczynski] just felt that Sheridan was more necessary in dynamics in the Shadow War and the Earth conflict. He needed a character that would carry that.”

Director David Eagle recalled reading the “Severed” script. “It was the first time I’d ever read a script and said to myself, ‘How are we going to do this?’ Then I’d turn the page and read and say, ‘Oh, my goodness, how are we going to do this?’ That was the first time I’d ever done that. That was how big that show was. The battle scenes were even bigger in the original script. It was beyond a television budget in the original description. It had to be scaled down somewhat. We had, like, 17-20 stuntmen.”

It was during the filming of this show in which Eagle was confronted with his worst nightmare: He got sick while working with a stomach flu. “Directing is a grueling experience and you have to have 100% concentration. People ask you hundreds of questions a day and you have to intelligently answer each of them. There was a question as to whether or not I was even going to come in the next day. But I kept plodding through and I assured them I would be in. Everyone just came up with ideas and pitched in. It was a great show and I’m very proud of it.”

In “Ship of Tears” Sheridan unexpectedly received a new ally against the darkness: Psi Cop Alfred Bester. With this episode, it was revealed that Bester had a love in his life. “That’s what makes the writing so interesting!” noted Walter Koenig. “They’re so dimensional. Joe doesn’t write cardboard cut-outs. He doesn’t write black and white characters. He writes characters with nuance and subtlety. We are not all one thing. There’s nobody who is wholly virtuous. Or consummately evil. Everyone from [serial killer] Jeffrey Dahmer on up, has some con-

“I’m in awe, Lennier. The way you can take a straightforward, logical proposition and turn it inside-out so that in the end it says...what you want it to say instead of what it actually means.”

—Marcus

GREY 17 IS MISSING

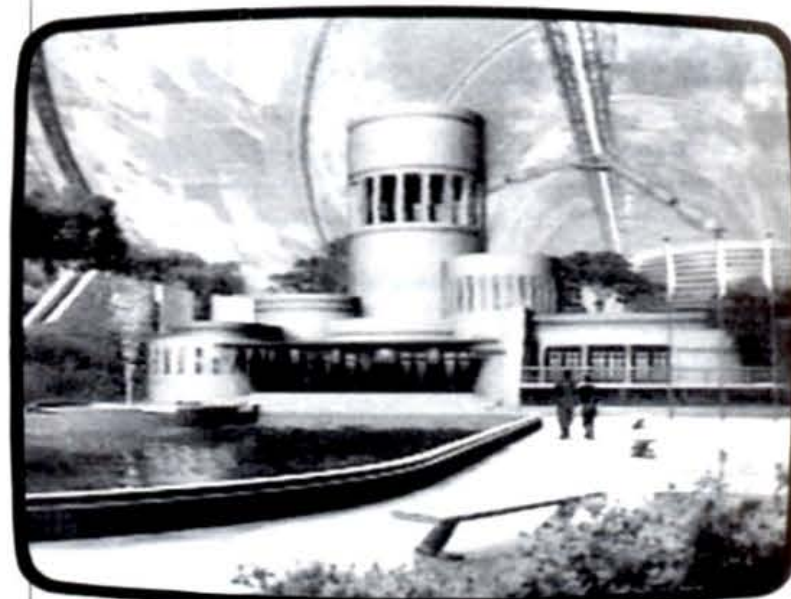
★★

10/07/1996, #319 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by John C. Flinn, III.

On Minbar, Rathenn (Time Winters) appoints Delenn Entil’zah, but her commission is opposed by Alit Neroon (John Vickery), because he believes she is becoming too powerful. He is determined to stop her, killing her if necessary, at the installation ceremony on Babylon 5. Marcus challenges Neroon to denn-s’ha (mortal combat) using Minbari fighting pikes. Neroon is about to finish Marcus, but relents realizing that if a human is willing to die for a Minbari, Delenn’s cause may be just. He interrupts her inauguration, swearing allegiance to her. Garibaldi discovers a lost Grey Sector level where he is captured by a religious cult controlled by a fanatic, Jerimiah (Robert England). They believe that all life is part of a universal whole and are awaiting death by a perfect predator, the Zarg, which will consume them. Garibaldi stuns, then kills the creature while Jerimiah’s faith fails when faced with the prospect of his own death.

A highlight of this episode is a fierce battle with Minbari fighting sticks between Marcus and Neroon. According to John Copeland, stunt coordinator Kerry Rossall had the task of carefully working out the choreography between the actors and their stunt double counterparts. “Jason Carter and John Vickery are extremely accomplished theatre actors and both have extensive fight background on stage. We felt that we would get a better looking fight using the two actors as much as possible. There were also stunt doubles, but most of what you see in the episode are the two actors. Joe [Straczynski] wanted a very brutal, realistic fight.”

“John Flinn was shooting with a hand held camera and having Jason charging right into the lens. Well, Jason misjudged a swing of the staff and nailed John Flinn right in the family jewels. However, I can report that John did not drop the camera.”



Foundation Imaging CGI matte shot of the interior of Babylon 5 from “Grey 17 Is Missing,” as the station hosts Delenn’s installation as Entil’zah.

“The enemy is fear. The enemy is ignorance. The enemy is the one who says we must hate that which is different. Because, in the end, that same hate will turn on you and destroy you.”

—Reverend Will Dexter’s sermon

AND THE ROCK CRIED OUT, NO HIDING PLACE

★★★ 1/2

10/14/1996, #320 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by David J. Eagle.

Visiting Centauri Minister Virini (Francois

Giroday), has been instructed by Emperor Cartagia to end the feud between Lord Refa (William Forward) and Londo. Londo, tired of Refa's machinations in the Royal Court, plans his rival's demise. He uses Vir to lure G'Kar into a trap. Refa kidnaps Vir and uses a telepath to extract the scheme's details. He goes to the Narn homeworld to get credit for G'Kar's capture, but instead finds himself trapped. Brother Theo (Louis Turenne) introduces Sheridan to a pair of his colleagues, Baptist Minister Rev. Will Dexter (Mel Winkler) and Rabbi Leo Meyers (Erik Avary) who are couriers for the resistance against Clark. Sheridan and Delenn go to a secret location where she reveals the newly built Ranger White Star fleet.

Director David Eagle recalled that actor William Forward was not too pleased upon learning that his character was being killed in this episode. "I actually asked him about that," said Eagle. "I said, 'When did you know about this and what did you think when you read it?' And he said, 'Well, you know, I kinda had a feeling it was going to happen sooner or later.' Meaning, he had thought about it months before. He was happy that his character had had that many appearances on the show. We always had great luck with actors, whether they were in recurring or regular roles or even just day players."

"Bill is one of those professional actors who comes in prepared, knows his part, his lines, and has a few suggestions to make. I will make every effort to incorporate them if they make sense. And pulls off a great performance. I was sorry to see him go."



Vir is kidnapped by Lord Refa and scanned telepathically to learn of Londo's plans in "And the Rock Cried Out, No Hiding Place."

"History awaits."

—Delenn

"Hello. You must be Delenn. I'm Anna Sheridan, John's wife."

—Anna Sheridan to Delenn

SHADOW DANCING

★★★ 1/2

10/21/1996. #321 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Kim Friedman.

Aboard the White Star, Ivanova and Marcus are ordered to Sector 83 where Sheridan expects a Shadow attack. They encounter a Shadow scout, jam its transmissions and manage to destroy it, but not before it disables the White Star. As the Shadow fleet arrives, the Alliance defeats the Shadows at a cost of two of their ships for every Shadow ship lost. On Babylon 5, Franklin is stabbed and left to die while trying to help a lurker attacked by thugs. Delirious, he finally meets himself—a mocking alter-ego who forces him to confront himself. He drags himself far enough to seek help and recovers. In hyperspace, the Shadows release a shuttle destined for Babylon 5 and later that night, Anna (Melissa Gilbert), Sheridan's late wife, arrives at his quarters while John is asleep.

Said Peter Jurasik, "The big story in

tradition in their personalities, a contradiction in their behavior that belies who they appear to be.

"Any actor who plays a heavy, who plays with some conviction, has to take the approach that the character they're playing is somebody they can relate to. That his behavior is justifiable in order to make the character believable. You cannot editorialize the character you're playing and still maintain credibility. You have to believe in the character, as I've come to believe in Bester. I know that he does things that are anti-social; he's committed murder. And yet, in order to embrace this character, and make him believable, I have chosen to find the means to justify his behavior. There are some very positive things about him. He's very loyal to his own group. He has a great sense of passion and love for the people he cares about.

"Sitting back objectively and not being involved would I applaud his actions? I would not. But that isn't my position. My position is to be that character. I have to find merit in what he does. And it's not that far-fetched. He comes from a different frame of reference. His belief is that the 'mundanes' are wanted killers, self-destructive and their purpose is to eradicate the telepaths who are different."

One mark of good storytelling is the author's ability to occasionally evoke surprise from his viewers, as Straczynski did in "Interludes and Examinations" when Ambassador Kosh was killed in his quarters when the Shadows boldly struck and engaged in combat.

For both Patricia Tallman and Jeffrey Willerth, Kosh's death was actually a very emotional moment. "It was wild!" exclaimed Tallman. "I got very emotional. I didn't expect that. He was very much trying to be a protector of the humans and trying to guide humans. And to see him destroyed like that, just made me weep."

"Pat doesn't have a corner on that episode," replied Willerth who crouched in darkness underneath the Vorlon's curtains. "Everyone" was emotional about the event, he said. "It's my favorite episode. It was in-

"Joe doesn't write black and white characters. He writes them with nuance and subtlety. There is nobody who is wholly virtuous. Or consummately evil."

—Actor Walter Koenig—



Michael York as an Earth/Minbari war veteran who believes himself to be King Arthur in "A Late Delivery from Avalon."

credibly emotional for me. It was so well-scripted. It came at a time when the character's popularity was building. We were starting to understand that the Vorlons were supposed to be the key to the future. They were involved in some way in resolving the Shadow War that had developed. The humans had to have an alliance with the Vorlons. They started to realize the importance of the Vorlons. And Kosh is suddenly killed. I was pretty floored!

"I found out prior to reading the script. We were going to a farewell party after work for an assistant director who was my friend, and was the one that got me on the show. Doug Corey. Right as we were leaving the set, the assistant director told me that Kosh was being killed. I was devastated and had no idea why or how. Just like all the fans—I couldn't believe it was happening. It was a tough day for me. I was losing my friend, the assistant director and my

character was getting killed."

In the season's (literal) cliffhanger, "Z'ha'dum," actress Melissa Gilbert, Bruce Boxleitner's wife, appeared as John Sheridan's long, lost wife, Anna Sheridan. Surprisingly, Melissa Gilbert initially didn't want to guest star in BABYLON 5, as she wasn't known for doing episodic guest star appearances, and didn't want to encroach on her husband's "territory," but very quickly she became intrigued with the idea and convinced her agents.

"They were in need of a little media attention," admitted Gilbert. "I think they thought that having Bruce's wife come and play his wife would be a great way to get some ratings, ads and interviews and so on. Access Hollywood and stuff, so they hired me."

The moment is important for the couple, as this was Gilbert's first acting role after the birth of their son, Michael Garrett Boxleitner.

There were also several personal ironies about the experience that audiences were not aware of. Veteran actor Jeff Corey, who also guest starred in STAR TREK's "The Cloud Minders," was once actor Leonard Nimoy's acting teacher. "Z'ha'dum" was di-

rected by Adam Nimoy, Leonard's son. That's the first irony. "Are you aware of the irony of me acting with Jeff Corey again, who was my private acting coach when I was a little girl?" smiled Gilbert. "Who basically, more or less, gave me the dramatic note that got me the role in *LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE*? He's my mother's acting teacher."

To top it off, Adam and Melissa both grew up in grade school together. "I loved working with Adam," said Gilbert. "We had a blast! We had a really nice time to-



Filming G'Kar's drug-induced dream sequence in "Dust," in which he witnesses his father's death, tied to a tree. Left: Art direction sketch by production designer John Iacovelli.

gether. He's very insightful and clear in what he wants. He doesn't shoot a lot of footage. He only gets what he needs and goes on and I like that."

Gilbert actually had no knowledge of *BABYLON 5* until her husband was cast in the series during the second season. Quickly, she too, became a fan. "I enjoy watching *BABYLON 5*!" said Gilbert. "I read all the scripts. I always knew what was going on. It was a lovely show. It's not a soap opera, but a space opera."

"I liked being so pivotal to the arc! Just coming in and doing a few little scenes and [yet] being a massive hitch. But also pushing the arc forward. I was really thrilled."

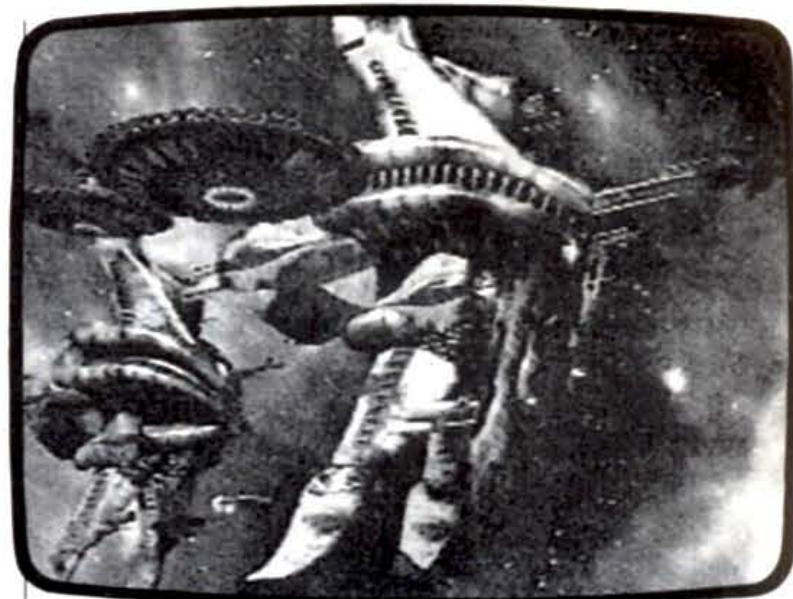
"That was meaningful because that was nice for me to get back in the saddle, as an actress, as it were after giving birth to our son. It was very bizarre. I have to tell you even though I was his wife, I was 'the other woman.' Playing 'the other woman' with my husband was strange. He's in the bed, Delenn's [watching him sleep], and then I come back. I was the one breaking up their relationship. I didn't necessarily like that."

"I don't mind being Bruce's wife and just kinda hanging out and he's married to a half-human/half-Minbari woman. They're going to take over the universe and they have this whole history. They're going to have a child, and they're in love, that's fine. I can go and drink coffee, and have fun with him, but if you put me in the middle of it—boy! So, it worked! But I couldn't really play it because Anna really didn't have a lot of emotions after being in that Shadow vessel for so long that it zapped all of her emotional being...so it was a little flat."

Talking at the end of the season, Andreas Katsulas was high on the series' progress. "At the wrap party, I just kept going around saying, 'Three seasons!' We've had three wrap parties. I mean, it's so incredible. When you look at the statistics you know how many potential series never get made into pilots, how many pilots that do get made ever see a first series. So there's a great satisfaction in that, in having sort of beaten the odds and been on the air for three years."

Katsulas was fascinated by the feedback process in which the series was created. He observed that it was not simply a one-way street whereby Straczynski would pound out scripts and deliver them without any expectation for inspiration in the other direction. On the contrary, he said, "I think what we put on the screen, he looks at it, and he goes back and he's inspired by what he sees. And then that changes. Maybe when he started out he never dreamed that Londo was going to change or G'Kar was going to change, but suddenly he's got two actors showing him these possibilities. You see, G'Kar is evolving, Londo is evolving, all the characters are going someplace and he's finding it and he's going with the changes and he's letting it happen."

"When you think about it, How many episodes out of those 66 have Peter [Jurasik] and I actually had scenes together? Not that many. That's what I find so intriguing, the power of these two characters when, in fact, Joe uses us very sparingly. And wisely so, because when you have a good thing you don't want to do too much of it. Better to leave the fans waiting for the next time the two of them confront each other." □



B5's White Star fleet engages the Shadows in Sector 83, gaining victory but suffering losses of two to one, CGI effects by Foundation Imaging.

BABYLON 5 will swell so much that by the end of the third year you will forget there was a Narn-Centauri war, because the stakes will be so much higher."

Plenty of special effects abound in this episode. When John Copeland was asked if traditional, practical (miniature models) effects could have been feasible on *B5*, he shook his head. "The traditional method is way too time consuming and expensive for us. A big part of being able to do *B5* for the budgets we had to work with was using computer animation and desktop computers for the visual effects. Sure, there are times when a model is the best way to go, but you need to have the dollars in your budget to deal with that."

"The future is all around us, waiting in moments of transition, to be born in moments of revelation. No one knows the shape of that future, or where it will take us. We know only that it is always born in pain."

—G'Kar

Z'HA'DUM

★★★★

10/28/1996, #322 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Adam Nimoy.

Anna Sheridan (Melissa Gilbert) has been working with the Shadows since the *Icarus* landed on Z'ha'dum. She invites John to visit the Shadows' homeworld. Franklin's medscans indicates that Anna was merged with a Shadow ship and is their agent. Sheridan leaves Delenn a farewell message. When he and Anna arrive on the planet, they meet with Morden (Ed Wasser) and Justin (Jeff Corey). Meanwhile, a Shadow fleet surrounds B5. A Shadow sentient enters the room as Justin angrily tells Sheridan he will do what he's told. Sheridan fires a concealed PPG gun, and retreats to a balcony overlooking a bottomless chasm. Sheridan signals the White

Anna (Melissa Gilbert) is extinguished along with a Shadow city as the White Star, rigged with high-yield nuclear weapons, explodes in "Z'ha'dum."



BILL MUMY

The LOST IN SPACE child star finds himself in what he considers the greatest SF series ever made.

By David Bassom

Three decades after he was immortalized as Will Robinson, the 10 year-old hero of Irwin Allen's cult science fiction series LOST IN SPACE, Bill Mummy headed back into the deep reaches of the final frontier. As noble Minbari Lennier in BABYLON 5, Mummy won the admiration of a new generation of SF fans around the world and played a highly prominent role in what he considers to be the most ambitious SF television show ever made. Furthermore, as the co-creator of Nickelodeon's SF/comedy series SPACE CASES, he has established a whole new universe for genre aficionados to explore and hopefully adore.

Mummy's involvement with BABYLON 5 began as a result of a telephone call from the show's creator/executive producer, J. Michael Straczynski, in the summer of 1993. "Joe remembered me from my earlier work and wanted to see me," the actor recalled. "I went in for a regular audition, and I read Lennier's first scene [from "The Parliament Of Dreams"] where he comes to the station and meets Delenn [Mira Furlan]. At the time, I thought it was just a guest shot, and the only thing I knew about the character was that he was raised from birth in a temple. So I decided to play him like Caine in KUNG FU, with a few of my own 'Mummyisms' thrown in, and the next thing I knew, my agent called to say that I'd been offered a five-year contract!"

Unfortunately, Mummy began to doubt the wisdom of his decision to take the role as soon as he sat down in BABYLON 5's infamous makeup chair. Prior to starting work on the series, the actor had not seen its pilot, "The Gathering," and was thus blissfully ignorant of what a Minbari looked like, or what an ordeal it would be to become Lennier. "At the beginning, the makeup process was almost



Mummy as Lennier with Delenn (Mira Furlan) in second season's "Revelations." Mummy was upset to see his character turn into a coward and ended the show bitterly.

unbearable," the actor admitted. "I had never done anything like it in my life, except for an episode of LOST IN SPACE, where they turned Will into Dr. Smith. But that was just for two days, whereas in BABYLON 5, I had to do it every time I'm in front of the camera.

"It took three hours and 20 minutes the first season, and there were times when I wondered if I could stay with the show. It was difficult because, I loved playing Lennier and I liked being a part of the show, but the make-up was really unbelievable. If I was in the first shot of the day, I had to be up at four o'clock in the morning. We had two little kids and I wasn't sleeping at all! It was very, very hard.

"Later, Greg Funk from Optic Nerve got my makeup down to about 90 minutes, and he made it as comfortable as it possibly could be. So I'm really glad I stuck it out at the beginning."

Just as his makeup process improved, Mummy's character grew immensely after his debut. Originally introduced as Ambassador Delenn's meek diplomatic aide, Lennier surprised everyone when he displayed a penchant for martial arts which would have Steven Seagal quaking in his boots in the first season's penultimate episode, "The Quality of Mercy." Then, in the third season premiere "Matters Of Honor," he took the helm of the White Star and proved himself to be BABYLON 5's answer to Han Solo. "I loved the martial arts stuff because it showed that he's not a wimp—he can take care of business when he needs to. During the third season, with the Shadow War fully engaged so to speak, he had to mature a lot faster than he might otherwise have done. He was given some pretty awesome responsibilities, which was very exciting.

"At the beginning of the show, he was this guy who had spent his whole life in a temple, who went to Babylon 5 and was in awe of his surroundings. He was just like Bambi in the headlights. Two years later, he's a member of the War Council, helmsman of the White Star, firing at Shadow vessels and kicking ass! He became much more mature and aggressive, no longer in Delenn's shadow."

The third season episode "Ceremonies Of Light And Dark" added even more depth to Lennier's character, by revealing his deep, but unrequited, love for Delenn. Although this development came as something of a bombshell to the show's fans, Mummy was not surprised, as the shocking revelation was actually his idea! "During the second season, I started to feel that Lennier's loyalty to Delenn was developing into something else," he explained. "I went to Joe and asked him what he thought, and he told me to start playing it that way. Personally, I knew what [Lennier's situation] felt like because I was in love with Angela



Mumy initially regretted his decision to take the role due to Lennier's elaborate makeup process. "At the beginning it was almost unbearable," he said.

Cartwright on *LOST IN SPACE*, and I just couldn't do anything about it until we were older. So I used that experience to explore Lennier's feelings for Delenn."

Mumy had nothing but praise for the show's cast. "I love all the people on the show. We got along very well. It only takes one actor to make life miserable for everyone else. I've been on shows like that, and it's very unpleasant. On *BABYLON 5*, we had such a large cast that it would seem very likely that we would be faced with that kind of a situation, but weren't. Everyone got along very well, everyone's ego seemed to be in check and everyone understood that we're working on a novel for television."

Looking back on *BABYLON 5*, Mumy found it hard to choose favorite episodes. "I like them all, I really do," he said. "I loved 'The Quality of Mercy' for several reasons. First of all, June Lockhart [Mumy's screen mom Maureen Robinson in *LOST IN SPACE*] was in that show. Secondly, Lennier suddenly showed us that he was a very formidable physical force to be dealt with when he had to be. And third, that particular scene in the casino when the fight broke out happened to be filmed on my 40th-birthday. My wife and my son were there and it was all very touching, they got to watch me be an action hero! I was very happy about that." □

Star which has been loaded with two high-yield nuclear weapons. It plummets to the planet. Sheridan climbs the balcony and leaps into the pit just as the White Star detonates, vaporizing the Shadow city. Garibaldi's Starfury is absorbed into a Shadow vessel as their fleet withdraws.

Melissa Gilbert's association with *BABYLON 5* did not quite end with "Z'ha'dum." Author Jeanne Cavelos wrote the seventh *B5* novel, Dell Publishing's *The Shadow Within*, which detailed the entire tale of Anna Sheridan's perilous voyage on the Icarus and their fateful encounter with the Shadows.

Well aware of the novel, Gilbert noted that she was pleased with the results of Cavelos' work. "I thought it was great because I got to see what actually happened at Z'ha'dum. It was not far from what I had made up in my own mind! So I thought, 'Gee, I'm pretty great.' I liked it a lot. It's the only *B5* novel I've read. It was about me. I had to read it!"

Trivia: "We did have a rat named Agamemnon," said Gilbert. "He was three years old. He passed away, unfortunately."

SEASON FOUR "No Surrender, No Retreat"

"What are a few million lives compared to the glory of becoming a living god?" —Cartagia

"It takes a rare kind of wisdom to accept change and redemption in another."
—G'Kar to Zack

THE HOUR OF THE WOLF ★★★★★
11/04/1996. #401 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by David Eagle.

Ivanova, presuming Sheridan is dead, takes command. Delenn demands Kosh to help them discover what happened to Sheridan. He refuses, saying Sheridan has served his purpose. Lyta offers to help. If she can get close to Z'ha'dum, she may detect Sheridan's presence. Delenn tries to persuade The League of Non-Aligned Worlds to attack the Shadow homeworld, but they refuse. Delenn, Ivanova and Lennier take Lyta near Z'ha'dum and try to find Sheridan. Meanwhile, Londo arrives on Centauri Prime, his new posting as Advisor on Planetary Security. He discovers that Emperor Cartagia (Wortham Krimmer) is insane. Cartagia gave the Shadows a base on the island of Selene in exchange for their promise to make him a god. Shadow ships arrive in force, blotting out the Centauri sun. Mollari asks Vir to return to Centauri Prime where they will conspire against Cartagia. G'Kar leaves to find Garibaldi.

Presuming Sheridan dead, Claudia Christian as Ivanova (right) takes command, with Patricia Tallman (left) as Lyta and Mira Furlan as Delenn.



Over the course of the next six episodes, Peter Jurasik worked very closely with actor Wortham Krimmer, who was having a ball playing an insane emperor. "Bill Forward, who played Refa, and Wortham Krimmer were people who jumped in

and embraced me fully. They both put their arms around me and really wanted to get the work done. Interacting with Krimmer was just as easy as it could be because he just loved playing the character. He just loved playing with me. He and I were like two little boys playing in a sandbox. The same as Bill Forward as Refa. We were like two little boys playing with trucks. Just as happy and completely involved. Nothing to it.

"In terms of the character, it was a dangerous and scary time. Big doings. He was trying to put things right. Londo had walked into a big, long road into a cul-de-sac and he had to take the long walk out. On the way out you'd pass the Hall of Records."



Londo is given a shackled G'Kar as a gift by the mad Emperor Cartagia (Wortham Krimmer) in "Whatever Happened to Mr. Garibaldi?"

"If you are going to be worried every time the universe doesn't make sense, you are going to be worried every moment of every day for the rest of your natural life."

—G'Kar

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO MR. GARIBALDI? ★★★★★
11/11/1996. #402 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Kevin Dobson.

G'Kar follows Garibaldi's trail and discovers that a scrap dealer sold a piece of his Starfury on a remote planet. Questioning the trader in a bar, he provokes a fight. He is rescued by Marcus who gets the information. G'Kar is kidnapped by Centauri guards and is shipped to Centauri Prime. He is given to Londo as a gift. When Londo sees G'Kar in his cell, they make a pact. If G'Kar will help him kill the Emperor, Londo will free Narn. Sheridan awakens beneath Z'ha'dum. Hanging between life and death, he meets the universe's first sentient being, Lorien (Wayne Alexander). To escape the limbo he's in, he must surrender to death. If he has anything worth living for, he will survive. Sheridan surrenders and relives his fall into the pit. Garibaldi is interrogated by unknown captors. They futilely ask him what he remembers about the ship that captured him. Garibaldi smashes his cell and is tranquilized. A man wearing a Psi Cop uniform enters and stares at Garibaldi. Delenn rallies the Rangers for a final attack on Z'ha'dum.

Wayne Alexander, previously seen as the Inquisitor, returned as Lorien, one of the strangest aliens ever. John Copeland remembered the development of the character. "We saw Lorien in sketches first. There was a design process that we went through to get the look that we wanted. Then there were some makeup and wardrobe tests so we could see what we were going to deal with. Wayne had finger extensions so it was important that he got to work with those and got used to them so they were believable. What we were going for was a very mysterious alien, one you were not sure what he was up to."

Lorien is so mysterious that we don't really

SEASON FOUR

Determining the fate of the galaxy, with character drama at the highest levels of government.

By Frank Garcia

With the opening episode, "The Hour of the Wolf," BABYLON 5's fourth season began a string of the most intense story arc episodes in the series. Two of the series' major conflicts, the Shadow War and the problem posed by Earth President Clark, were spectacularly addressed.

Throughout the year, every castmember had something to contribute. The station itself was no longer the only setting in which to tell stories. We visited Mars, Centauri Prime, Narn, and glimpsed various planets throughout the galaxy. Over the course of the first six episodes, major story arcs dominated. Two distinct story threads were juxtaposed: the events that would determine the final fate of the galaxy and character drama at the highest levels of government in Centauri Prime.

As the season opened, Sheridan came back from his death on Z'ha'dum with a strange alien named Lorien in tow and he

rallied the League of Non-Aligned Worlds into a fighting fleet to end the Shadow War. Garibaldi mysteriously reappeared after being snatched by the Shadows during the attack from last season's cliffhanger and G'Kar was caught by his old foes and sent to Centauri Prime. Appointed as an advisor of Planetary Security to the Emperor, Londo was horrified to discover that Emperor Cartagia was clearly insane and dangerous, having allowed the Shadows to use their planet as a base. He realized there was only one course of action: plot his assassination.

"In the Londo story you can never take out the element of fate," noted Peter Jurasik. "He couldn't get out of the way of his own decisions but also there was a bigger hand pushing him along—maybe it was the great maker JMS [series creator J. Michael Straczynski] we're talking about! Doomed. Cursed! That's why German fans love the Faust metaphor."

At one juncture Cartagia mercilessly whipped G'Kar as Londo stood by, staring

in distaste and horror. Does Londo feel for G'Kar here? "Absolutely! They become mirror images, in a sense," said Jurasik. "They are both patriots and warriors who are caught up in a time together there. They have the respect that two people who are bound together have for each other. There are a lot of things that lock them together. They've become good friends."

If a viewer looked a little deeper at the characters and situations of this story thread, Straczynski's literary allusions become apparent. Jurasik heartily agrees that Cartagia resembles the Roman Emperor Caligula, minus the sexcapades. "Yeah! Joe strove for and echoed a number of fascist regimes to build around Centauri. There was the Italian fascism government of Mussolini, the Roman government and Caligula, the Nazi government of Germany. All of those are metaphors." There was even a little bit of Brutus and Caesar in the way Londo plotted a stabbing of a leader. "Joe needed to pull at all those strings to support the whole Centauri puzzle. I love to see those things," said Jurasik.

It seemed as if the entire series was built toward one cataclysmic episode: "Into the Fire." The Army of Light finally confronted their enemies: the Vorlons and the Shadows. It was a fiery conflagration that surprisingly became an ideological as well as a physical conflict that ended quite abruptly. Straczynski finally revealed important philosophical themes he wanted to convey. Effectively, the Vorlons were the lords of obedience and order and the Shadows were lords of chaos and conflict. After engaging in fiery battles with each other every thousands of years or so, the guardians had lost their way.

Most fans were surprised that the abrupt conclusion of the Shadow Wars was made not by a fiery, special effects-filled battle but with a philosophical one. According to series star Bruce Boxleitner, that was the whole point. "That's what Joe intended it to be," he said. "He knew exactly what [the fans] wanted and didn't give it to them! I can see his reason behind it. It's obvious.

As the fourth season entered production, producers John Copeland, Douglas Netter and Joe Straczynski accepted the Hugo Award of the World Science Fiction Convention for third season's "Severed Dreams."





The Ambassadors: Andreas Katsulas as G'Kar, Peter Jurasik as Londo with aide Vir (Stephen Furst), and Mira Furlan as Delenn with aide Lennier (Bill Mumy), moving the show's action onto a broader galactic stage.

The shoot 'em up—we do that all the time. That's the difference between B5 and a lot of other stuff. There were more ideological things that he wanted to press home, to teach the audience, to put before them to make them think a little more than just a lot of boom, bang, and special effects. I was shocked by it first myself, because I was anticipating the stereotypical 'We're going to come to the big final conflict.' What was more significant about BABYLON 5 than other space operas, or other sagas like that, is everybody seems to do the same thing."

Producer John Copeland acknowledged that many fans felt cheated by the abruptness of the conflicts' resolution. "We weren't sure we'd have a fifth season and Joe was determined to give all the viewers a resolution to the storyline," he said. "Fans and viewers who have been critical of the termination of the Shadow War have tended to be looking too superficially at the overall storyline. Ultimately, the Shadow War thread was about who was really pulling the strings and influencing the younger races' development. It turned out to be both the Vorlons and the Shadows—they were both up to no good, really. They had been left as shepherds and they had long since stopped doing that function and instead had gotten into an ever escalating spiral of trying to impose their belief of what was the best

method of evolution—an orderly process [Vorlon] or chaotic through conflict [Shadow]. Ultimately the war could not end in a big galactic shoot out. It had to end with Sheridan being able to turn down both sides and with Lorien's sudden appearance on the side of the younger races, get the Vorlons and Shadows to recognize that they had outlived their usefulness and move beyond the Rim. And I think that was handled extremely well. I think that most viewers lost that point. It is easy to do when the story unfolds so subtly over the course of four years. You have to really be paying attention at that point. I also believe that more folks will figure this out as the seasons are repeated and repeated."

The season had barely begun and yet the Shadow War was over. What else was there to do? Momentum naturally had to settle down with some attention paid to various characters' personal problems and agendas before returning to the next major story arc, the problem of President Clark, whose corrupt power was rampant on Earth.

Two individuals who were caught up by (or helped propel) the machinations of the universe were telepath Lyta Alexander and Psi Cop Alfred Bester. As the season progressed, Lyta expressed her disgust at her treatment by mundanes. "I became increasingly uncomfortable with the way the com-

know who or where this alien is from. Subsequent dialogue revealed that he was indeed "the first one" and, said Copeland, Z'ha'dum isn't just the Shadows' homeworld, but Lorien's! "I believe that the implication of Lorien's dialogue is that this was his home before the Shadows came," he said. "They came to Z'ha'dum, to be close to Lorien."

"We can end this. Not just for now, not just for the next thousand years, but forever!"

—Sheridan

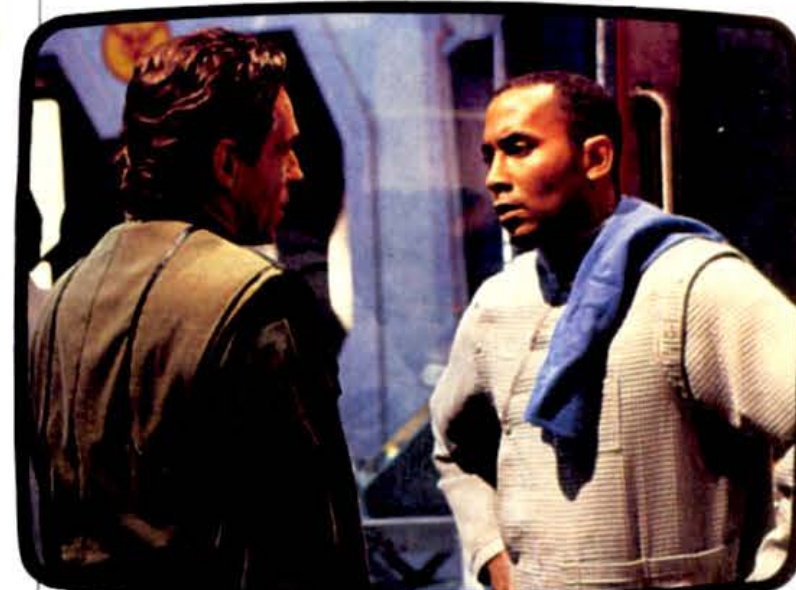
THE SUMMONING

★★★★

11/18/1996. #403 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by John McPherson.

When the Vorlons refuse to join the Ranger attack on Z'ha'dum, Marcus and Ivanova, trying to find First Ones to aid the Rangers, discover a massive Vorlon fleet hidden in a pocket of hyperspace. The League of Non-Aligned Worlds holds an open rally to protest Delenn's actions. As their mood turns hostile, a craft docks at the station and Sheridan, Lorien beside him, appears in the Zocalo. Sheridan convinces the League worlds to join the attack. Zack intercepts the freighter that salvaged Garibaldi's Starfury. A lifepod containing the unconscious security chief ejects from the craft. The freighter self-destructs. Emperor Cartagia, unable to break G'Kar's spirit, continues his torture. Near death during a brutal whipping, G'Kar finally screams not to save himself, but to save his race.

"I loved Wortham's Cartagia, he really brought a wonderful element to the show," said John Copeland. "I think all of the stuff that we shot with him was our homage to 'I, Claudius' and Caligula. Joe has always loved that miniseries. We also did some very cool effects shots that sold the Emperor's garden as really being outside."



Jeff Conaway as B5 security chief Zack, and Richard Biggs as Dr. Franklin in "The Summoning," as the Non-Aligned Worlds protest.

"Don't send the ships. Let it burn, Mollari. Let it all end in fire."

—Cartagia to Londo

FALLING TOWARD APOTHEOSIS

★★★★

11/25/1996. #404 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by David Eagle.

Fearing Kosh's presence is a threat to the Alliance, Sheridan orders him removed. Lyta Alexander lures the ambassador into a trap. During the fire fight, the Vorlon's true form is revealed—a tentacled, ectoplasmic creature of light. The piece of Kosh inside Sheridan is released and the two Vorlons intertwine in battle and they depart through the ceiling and outside of the station they explode. Lorien replenishes Sheridan's life force with some of his own. He explains that Sheridan will live for only 20 years, the price of his survival on Z'ha'dum. Sheridan proposes to Delenn. Londo worries Centauri Prime is a Vorlon target. Cartagia, positive they

will attack, anticipates the planet burning as a pyre to his godhood. Londo suggests trial and execution of G'Kar on Narn so that after the Centauri are eradicated, Cartagia will be remembered. Cartagia agrees and has one of G'Kar's eyes plucked because it offended him.

"What got to me was the technicalities of the special effects," said David Eagle, referring to the moment in which Kosh was electrocuted by Sheridan and his staff. "It was such a complicated scene to shoot." To help everyone, Eagle commissioned storyboards so that he could communicate his wishes via drawings. A safety meeting was held by all participants. "As we prepared to shoot the scene, we set it up, had three cameras, and three angles. What is supposed to happen is [Kosh's] head explodes and the Kosh energy creature comes out. That was the way it was scripted."

Three Kosh "heads" were available and on standby for additional takes. But in the preparation of the first take, with three cameramen in the danger zone, someone miscued the head's explosion prematurely. Cinematographer John Flinn was angry and upset as his son, John IV who was a camera operator, was one of those three people who could have been hurt. A second safety meeting was held while John Vulich repaired Kosh. But the second head fell off, smashing it. Ultimately, the final effect was pulled off in post-production with CGI graphics.



Londo looks on in horror as mad Centauri Emperor Cartagia dusts off a severed human head in "Falling Toward Apotheosis."

"There is no choice. By the end of this day, either Cartagia is dead or Centauri Prime will be destroyed."

—Londo

THE LONG NIGHT

★★★★

1/27/1997, #405 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by John LaFia.

Londo visits G'Kar's cell to discuss their plot. G'Kar will wear weakened chains and break them, distracting Cartagia's guards. Londo will take the Emperor aside and inject an undetectable neurotoxin. The Emperor threatens the plan by replacing G'Kar's chains. G'Kar's passion lets him break his new bonds and he wreaks havoc in the throne room. Cartagia accidentally knocks the syringe from Londo to the floor. Vir retrieves it and stabs the Emperor between the hearts, killing him. After Londo is made Prime Minister, he and Vir race home to remove the Shadows and prevent a Vorlon attack. Sheridan orders White Star 14's commander, Ericsson (Bryan Cranston) on a suicide mission. He will plant false information for the Shadows about an alliance base at Coriana 6, the Vorlons' next target. Sheridan hopes for a direct confrontation between the two forces. If he fails, Coriana 6 will be destroyed and six billion will die.

With an enormous battle building between the Vorlons and the Shadows, one begins to wonder,



Vir assassinates Cartagia with a syringe in "The Long Night," executing Londo and G'Kar's plot to eliminate the influence of the Shadows.

"Why don't the Vorlons tell the Humans/Army of Light that the weapon they need to defeat the Shadows are telepaths? After all, they altered human DNA in early Earth history to create telepaths, preparing them for the future battle."

"They and the Minbari shared the battle 1,000 years ago, and since the cycle is repeating anew, why don't the Vorlons pass on as much information as possible to help stop or reduce the loss of life in the battle? Why do Vorlons allow the humans to make their discoveries the hard way?" For answers, we asked Kosh himself. "In many ways the humans were simply pawns in the game that the Shadows and the Vorlons were playing," replied Jeffrey Willerth. "To give the humans all the information that they needed would have made that information accessible to the Shadows. Vorlons could not afford to let the Shadows understand their strategies and tactics. It would have been an information leak to have given the humans all the information. It would have altered the way that the Vorlons and the Shadows were playing with each other. It wasn't that they wanted to go into battle necessarily, but they certainly wanted to win. As Sheridan described it, it was settling squabbles that was going on between the Shadows and Vorlons. It was a matter of who was going to be right."

"A Vorlon said understanding is a three-edged sword: your side, their side...and the truth. The truth is we don't need you anymore."

—Sheridan to "Vorlons"

INTO THE FIRE

★★★ 1/2

2/03/1997, #406 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Kevin Dobson.

Londo and Vir must erase every trace of Shadow influence from Centauri Prime. Morden refuses to remove the Shadows' base, so Londo blows up the island. Morden warns that the Shadows have allies who'll ensure the Centauri will pay the price. Sheridan's forces neutralize a Vorlon observation post and puts his fleet between

Jerry Doyle as Garibaldi draws a blank face in the fog of the bathroom mirror in "Epiphanies," quitting his post as security chief on Babylon 5.



the Vorlons and Coriana 6. An apocalyptic battle begins with losses among all fleets. Calling reinforcements from the First Ones recruited by Ivanova and Lorien, the battle stops. Sheridan speaks with both the Vorlons and Shadows. He and Delenn convince them to stop controlling the younger races based on the argument that they no longer know who they are or what they want. Lorien declares that the First Ones, Shadows and Vorlons should pass beyond the Rim. The younger races are left to determine their own future as The Shadow War ends and The Third Age of Mankind begins.

"We never take the simple way of doing almost anything in this show, much as we'd like to sometimes," said Joe Straczynski. "Any time you're going to have a massive struggle, it's going to have mythic repercussions. A struggle that's going on for millennia would touch cultures in development and take on mythical, religious significance. We're going to play fair with the characters and with the scenario. The show itself is not religious, some of the characters are religious. If you're going to have a character who's a scientist or a religious person, you have to treat that honestly. Someone thanked me for creating a very moral show. And I corrected him. This is not a moral show. I don't have any morals to give anybody. It is an ethical show in the sense that it raises ethical questions and leaves it the viewer to debate and decide and determine what is correct for them. That should be the role of television, to be ethical in its discussions. Not to be moral and tell you what to think."



On the White Star, representatives of the Vorlons and Shadows agree to end the Shadow War and leave the Milky Way to the younger races.

"You know, the one thing in life that you can be sure about is that you are going to make mistakes."

—Garibaldi to Zack

EPIPHANIES

★★★ 1/2

2/10/1997, #407 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by John C. Flinn, III.

The Centaurum vote to delay deciding on a new Emperor. Londo departs for B5 after appointing the Minister (Damian London) as interim Regent. Garibaldi quits as Security Chief. Bester returns, telling Sheridan of President Clark's plot to embargo B5. Clark also plans to undercut public support for the station using Psi Corps' Black Omega squadron to attack an EarthForce transport and leave evidence blaming B5. Sheridan takes Bester to Z'ha'dum for Shadow technology to cure his lover, Carolyn. Lyta sends a telepathic message and the Shadows' allies evacuate Z'ha'dum. Sheridan anticipates it's a trap and reverses the White Star's course. The planet explodes taking with it all the remaining Shadow technology. Before leaving, Bester visits Carolyn's cryostasis chamber and vows to damage Sheridan's alliance if they interfere with his plans. Awakening during a bad dream, the Regent discovers a new nightmare—a

“Joe purposely put us together knowing we had a history that went back 34 years. [Writer] Harlan [Ellison] has always had a secret passion to be an actor.”

—Actor Walter Koenig—

mand staff treated Lyta,” said Patricia Tallman. “They just took advantage of her and later they tried to take her out of her quarters. She was never asked out for a pizza. But they ask her for favors continuously. It was just odd to me because they were so lovely to each other. They treated her like a leper. That encapsulated the view of how telepaths were treated by humans. That’s kind of a microcosm of what was going on at Earth, among normal humans.”

Over the last six episodes of the season, Straczynski juxtaposed several major threads that ultimately collided late in the season: Garibaldi’s personal meeting with his benefactor, William Edgars (veteran actor Efrem Zimbalist, Jr.) and Sheridan’s increasing obsession to collate a fleet against Earth.

In a private meeting inside a shuttle car, in “The Face of the Enemy,” we watched as a major plot unfolded when Psi Cop Bester revealed that he had brainwashed Michael Garibaldi to locate a hidden threat to the Psi Corps’ existence. Walter Koenig recalled the day in which this shuttle car scene was filmed. “That was certainly a very powerful episode,” he said. “Even though Bester only had one scene, it was a very strong scene. I loved the way they shot it. They brought a lot of intensity to the scene by cutting from medium-close to tight shots, to very tight shots. We look at his eyes or to his lips as he’s speaking. “It was a relatively stagnant

Sheridan (Bruce Boxleitner) finds the station at the mercy of ISN reporters, manipulating the facts in “The Illusion of Truth.”



First One, Lorien (Wayne Alexander), replenishes Sheridan’s life force in “Falling Toward Apotheosis,” giving him twenty years to live, makeup by Optic Nerve Studios.

scene in terms of movement. When I finished performing it, I wondered to myself whether it was intense enough. It seemed really underplayed. But when I saw it on the screen, I realized the camera underscored each moment. When they brought in the music, it enhanced the work. I could see from the dailies it was definitely improved by the way it was shot.”

An added feature of this sequence were in the flashbacks when Garibaldi’s experiences were replayed and we saw how B5’s former security chief was wheeled into Psi Corps’ chambers for programming. In a brief black and white moment, Bester gave his orders to another Psi Cop, who just happens to be...Harlan Ellison, the writer and series conceptual consultant! “Joe purposely put us together in that scene knowing that we had a history that went back 34 years,” acknowledged Koenig. “Harlan has always had a secret passion to be an actor. He was a bit nervous when he did the episode.”

Throughout, Ellison contributed in different ways. He served as a sounding board for the producers, read scripts, viewed episodes, lent books on costuming. He was the voice of “Sparky,” B5’s computer in “Ceremonies of Light and Dark,” and Zooty’s machine voice in “Day of the Dead.” He also contributed ideas for story elements like the Shadow Planet Killer as seen in “The Long Night.” For fifth season’s “A View from the Gallery,” he suggested the episode be written from the point of view of the

Keeper, attached to his neck.

“There’s a moment where Bester is talking with his girlfriend and she’s in one of those cryo-chambers,” recalled Walter Koenig. “He has a moment with her at the end of the show. He’s talking to her and it’s a very nice speech. I suggested to Joe that he might want to have a little bit of a closure to the story of Carolyn with a monologue that he would have. And that’s what he wrote, this monologue which is more of a soliloquy than a monologue. That was interesting. I thoroughly enjoyed that.”

“There is no force in this galaxy that can stop what we have done here together. Nothing will be able to stop us.”

—Sheridan

THE ILLUSION OF TRUTH

★★★

2/17/1997. #408 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Stephen Furst.

ISN, now Clark’s propaganda machine, sends journalist Dan Randall (Jeff Griggs) to tour Babylon 5 and film a report. Sheridan, hoping to partly represent B5’s point of view, agrees. Randall films Sheridan with alien ambassadors, the medlab area including the cryostasis chambers, and Delenn and Sheridan together. He interviews Garibaldi who says Sheridan has a “God complex.” The report, slyly edited and full of out of context clips, airs. It creates the impression that aliens are controlling Sheridan. Randall brings in psychologist Dr. Indiri (Henry Darrow), an expert on Minbari War Syndrome. He claims that Sheridan is suffering from self hatred, causing him to side with the Minbari and other races, believing them superior to humans. Randall implies that, backed by Delenn, Sheridan plans to force humans to become half-Minbari. He slips in a reference that his father is missing.

Almost a remake of second season’s “And Now for a Word,” this episode spotlights the B5 staffers in a manipulated report by ISN at a time when the war with President Clark is still going on. “It was a different spin on a similar story,” said John Copeland. “‘Illusion of Truth’ really had to do with the making of propaganda and how things can be taken out of context and given an extremely insidious spin. In point of fact, it is a cautionary tale of the power of the press.”



ISN journalist Dan Randall (Jeff Griggs) tours the station to file a filmed report that suggests Sheridan is selling out in “The Illusion of Truth.”

“If we do not know these humans, then they are a mystery to us. The universe puts a mystery in front of us as a gift. Politeness requires that we at least try to solve it.”

—Delenn to Dukhat

ATONEMENT

★★★

2/24/1997. #409 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Tony Dow.

Franklin replaces G’Kar’s missing eye with a



ill-matched prosthetic. Sheridan sends Franklin and Marcus on a mission to Mars. Calenn (Brian Carpenter), one of Delenn's clan leaders, comes to B5 insisting Delenn return to Minbar to be judged. They believe her relationship with a human endangers the purity of their race. Delenn and Lennier enter "The Dreaming" and relive events leading to the death of Dukhat (Reiner Shone) in 2243. Later, with Calenn, they hear Dukhat's dying words that Delenn is a child of Valen, now known to have been the human, Jefferey Sinclair. Delenn asks Lennier to retrieve historical records from the Grey Council chambers. They prove that after the last Great War, Valen's descendants introduced human DNA into Minbari society. Fearing the information might cause "great confusion" among the Minbari, the matter is dropped. Delenn may be given to Sheridan as a symbol of peace between the Human and Minbari races.

Actor Brian Carpenter who portrayed Calenn, Delenn's clan leader, was surprised when he made a startling discovery upon taking this role. "Minbaris are hard of hearing," he said. "My real ears were covered with latex, so I had to really concentrate on what other people were saying. I could hear my own voice reverberating in my head. 'I was thrilled that the role was large and important in the episode. I was really glad I had spent time learning my lines. I did my biggest scene in the episode, in the temple, in one take! We did go back and do a couple of pickups but basically we got it all done right away. That was very satisfying and fun; it was like doing theatre because the room was full of an 'audience' of extras, as well as the crew.'"

For Carpenter, filming "Atonement" provided an unexpected bonus. "I was in Child Star heaven. Tony Dow, formerly Wally from LEAVE IT TO BEAVER, was directing the episode. He was great! He's a really nice guy and we got along well. Also, Bill Mumy, formerly Will Robinson on LOST IN SPACE and a character in at least one classic TWILIGHT ZONE, was in a couple of my scenes. He was also very friendly and fun to work with. It was a thrill to be associated with both these actors whose work I had known for years!"



Bruce Boxleitner as Sheridan jams off-camera with three Elvises during filming of "Epiphanies." Straczynski used the three kings arriving on the station as a brief visual pun for Sheridan's faux divinity.

two mechanics.

For Bruce Boxleitner, the story threads detailing Sheridan's bold gambit to defeat President Clark in the middle to end of this season was the series' finest hours. "For me, that's where the series peaked," he said. "That was the high point, where we brought the war home. Sheridan got to really bear down and be Captain Ahab-ish, like MOBY DICK.

That was the feeling I wanted to get, his obsession for Clark's forces, and to hang him. I thought it was quite exciting."

Director David Eagle recalled a major incident involving actor Richard Biggs during the filming of "Between the Darkness and the Light" which indicated just how intense filming became. The setting was this: Lyta, Garibaldi and Franklin were running through the caverns of Mars, attempting to rescue the captured Captain Sheridan. The scene had Garibaldi deck a pair of guards and Biggs was eager to join the fray. "Rick Biggs said to me, 'David, it's getting to be the end of the fourth season, we don't know if we're going to be back for the fifth, and I never get to get into fights. I know it's not scripted, but I'd like to get into this one.' I said, 'Gee Rick, I can't just arbitrarily make that kind of decision. You know how Joe is. He writes things very specifically and if I were to make that big a change, that could affect something in the future. I don't want to do that without his permission.'"

During lunch, he allowed Biggs to choreograph the moment with stunt coordinator Kerry Rossall, but Straczynski was unusually absent so Eagle got the okay from John Copeland. But when the time came to film the moment where Franklin

"In the Londo story you can never take out fate. He couldn't get out of the way of his own decisions, but there was a bigger hand pushing him along. Cursed!"

—Actor Peter Jurasik—

would slug a guard, Rick Biggs' fist actually connected with his opponent's jaw and sent him flying, with blood splattering all over. Everyone was horrified and filming stopped. "Rick felt terrible after having nagged me about getting into the fight scene that he came up to me with his tail between his legs and said, 'I will never ask to do something that isn't scripted

again and I will never question the director's judgment or decision on a scene!'" recalled Eagle.

"The stuntman came back from the hospital at the end of the day with his eye bandaged up. He would miss a few days of work but he was going to be okay. Rick was greatly relieved to hear this and was the first one to see the stuntman, apologized and made sure he was okay."

Looking back over her experience of filming this season, Patricia Tallman recalled, "I remember my joy of being a regular castmember, of being part of a team," she said. "I remember working out a schedule for my son and I, so I could go to work and he could be okay. Missing him during the day and making friends with the cast and crew. They're going to be friends forever for me."

Also reviewing the fourth season, director David Eagle opined, "My feeling was it was too rushed. The whole season was too rushed and there was a reason for it. Joe [Straczynski] and John [Copeland] felt there would not be a fifth season. 'Into the Fire' should have been a two-parter. That's something that should have taken much longer. Joe was trying to cram two season's worth into one season."



Delenn asks Lennier to retrieve historical records from the Grey Council chambers involving human DNA experiments in "Atonement."

"The Captain's never forgotten about Mars."
—Dr. Franklin, to Mars resistance leader "Woo-hoo?"

—Lennier to Sheridan

RACING MARS

★★★

4/21/1997. #410 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Jesus Salvador Trevino.

Franklin and Marcus, seeking a coalition with the Mars Resistance, meet Captain Jack (Donovan Scott), who handles first contacts for the Resistance. Mars believes Sheridan has forsaken them. Franklin and Marcus explain that Sheridan was fighting the Shadow War. Captain Jack attempts to assassinate Number One (Marjorie

Monaghan). Marcus shoots Jack in the shoulder, killing a Keeper. Jack escapes. Franklin's examination shows that the creature joins itself to the neuro-control centers of a host, increasingly influencing it. On B5, Sheridan confronts Garibaldi about his ISN interview. Michael accuses Sheridan of believing himself more important than the cause. Wade (Mark Schneider) witnesses this and urges Michael to help him stop Sheridan. Delenn advises Sheridan to apologize for losing his temper. Claiming that Sheridan has messianic delusions, Garibaldi punches him. Garibaldi joins Wade's conspiracy.

Of all the characters that populated the saga's tapestry, which one has remained relatively intact? "Of all the arcs, Garibaldi's is one of those that changed the least from my original notes," said Joe Straczynski. "In fact, the other day, as we were closing down some of the B5 facilities, I glanced over the original notebook that had my original notes on the series, prepared as a guidebook for the whole series. I broke out my notes onto individual cards, 22 per season, for five years, and laid the whole thing out in this one big notebook with card-slots on every page. A couple of other people were in the room, and they saw it. The first time anyone other than myself had ever seen it. Ironically, it was there in plain sight in my office for five years, nobody ever noticed it, just one more black notebook. They were surprised at just how much had not changed in the overall arc and there was Garibaldi's arc, beat for beat, from the beginning."



Franklin, Marcus, and Mars Resistance leader Number One (Marjorie Monaghan) try to save the doomed Captain Jack in "Racing Mars".

"Look, if they want to play games, well fine. We can play games too, only we can play them better, because we have the truth on our side. You can't kill the truth...Actually, you can kill the truth, but it always comes back to haunt you later."

—Sheridan to Ivanova

LINES OF COMMUNICATION ★★★

4/28/1997. Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by John C. Flinn, III.

Delenn goes to the border of Minbari space, where their allies transports have been raided. Forell (G. W. Stevens), a Religious caste crew member, threatens Delenn at gunpoint. He demands she listen to the attackers. A Drakh Emissary (Jean-Luc Martin) boards. Forell warns of increasing strife between the Religious and Warrior castes. The Emissary promises the Drakh will prevent Warrior control of Minbar, if the Religious caste allies with the Drakh. In return, the Drakh want a new home on an uninhabited world, bordering Minbari space. Delenn agrees to consider their request. She and Lennier realize the Drakh were Shadow servants on Z'ha'dum. Recognizing Delenn as an accomplice in the destruction of Z'ha'dum, the Drakh attacks her ship. Delenn's crew beats the

SET DESIGN

John Iacovelli on designing Straczynski's 5-mile-long station.

By Frank Garcia
and Robert T. Garcia

It's not every day that someone asks you to build the interiors of a five-mile-long space station. Joe Straczynski did just that when he met and spoke with John Iacovelli. Straczynski needed a strong and versatile production designer for his ambitious five-year saga. Iacovelli (HONEY, I SHRUNK THE KIDS) was a veteran of stage, television and film productions, and had the requisite background needed for the project.

Babylonian Productions, in a move to save money, moved their production off the Warner Bros lot (where the pilot was filmed) and into a gigantic warehouse in Sun Valley. There, Iacovelli and a small army of construction specialists customized it for the series' five year run.

"We found this building and we had about eight weeks to literally build these interior walls, soundproof the building and build 16 sets to start shooting," recalled Iacovelli. "It was a pretty daunting task. We tried to show that BABYLON 5's a big place, analogous to something the size of Manhattan in space. There's always that challenge to make it seem bigger than an ocean liner."

To accomplish the illusion he used all the tricks of his trade. The sets were divided between three soundstages, A, B and C. To fit in a large number of sets in a limited space of 60,000 feet, Iacovelli pulled a trick from theater productions and installed the practice of using "swing stages." That means sets are constantly redressed for multi-purpose uses.

"Almost every set was redressed for an episode," said Iacovelli. "The Observation Dome was the Bridge to another ship. We've done that a couple of times with [Earth Force warships] the Agamemnon and the Cortez. On Stage A we had this area called the Docking Bay which was basically an open area which was very flexible and we often put other smaller sets within that.



Production designer John Iacovelli, behind-the-scenes third season, building Straczynski's science fiction universe inside a warehouse in Sun Valley, California.

"We moved them around. There's the Fresh Aire restaurant which was in the same place as the Zen Garden. Every set doubled at least once. The Council Chamber, I think, we've gotten six or eight sets out of that basic set-up. Actually, the Med Bay was the only set that did not become some other set."

A number of "fold and hold" sets were created. When not in use, those sets were collapsed down and stored in a fenced area of the facility's parking lot, and brought out when needed. With the weather being as dry as it was in Sun Valley, Iacovelli remembered that they didn't have tarps over them at first. Then one night, a storm moved in and he found himself calling crew members to rush over to the studio and cover the stored sets.

To create the Zocalo (which doubled for the Main Corridor) Iacovelli used forced perspective tricks to create the 135-foot

Drakh mothership. To counter Clark's propaganda, Sheridan appoints Ivanova in charge of the Voice of the Resistance stellarcasts. Franklin and Marcus tell the Mars Resistance leadership if they support Sheridan's cause, he will make Mars an independent state once Earth is liberated.

Delenn gave a speech about how destroying is easy but rebuilding is what's really hard. She has to return to Minbar and rebuild the fractured Gray Council. Such drama and speeches are meaningful for actress Mira Furlan because of her Yugoslavian background. "If I know that an actor has a button that I can push I am not opposed to doing so in the course of the script," noted Joe Straczynski. "I knew that Mira Furlan went through a great deal in Yugoslavia and I knew that if I put her in a situation where we have to have her talking about a similar situation happening with the Minbari, out of that will come a truth in her performance that in another actor might not be there. I try to find the points where I can connect the actor to the part because then a certain verisimilitude comes into the performance."

"For example, in one moment, Delenn addressed the Gray Council and admonished them, 'You stood here and did nothing!' Certainly the world stood by and let Yugoslavia tear itself apart from the inside and the anger that comes through that performance was very obvious." In fact, that day at lunch, after that scene, she walked over to me and said, "So, how long were you living in Yugoslavia?"

Noted Mira Furlan, "Other immigrants have the privilege to be nostalgic towards their homelands, but we don't have one. It's been destroyed and it's now come down to these claustrophobic, half-Fascist little states that hate all the surroundings, the foreigners and all the minorities."

"There is a lot in Delenn that I can connect to. Her being isolated from her own people and her being somewhere in between, not really belonging to any kind of group and so on. Sometimes it really makes me wonder. All these parallels and all these coincidences."



Delenn tells Sheridan she can't accompany him on his campaign against Earth but must return to Minbar in "Lines of Communication".

"If you're gonna wait for the universe to start making sense, you have a long wait ahead of you."
—Sheridan to Zack

CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS

★★★

5/05/1997. #412 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by David Eagle.

Zack Allen is ordered to relieve Garibaldi of his Security Identicon, military issue weapons and comlink. Wade assigns Garibaldi to help a client from Mars pass B5 Customs without Security checks. It's Garibaldi's ex-fiancee, Lise Hampton (Denise Gentile), now married to Mars pharmaceuticals magnate, William Edgars. Zack

central corridor. The set curved slightly upward at an angle, went for about 50 or 60 feet, and then rose off the floor for another 10 or 20, getting smaller and smaller to meet a painted backdrop. It was one of the few sets not enhanced by computer graphics to achieve it's desired effect of size and depth.

For the miles of smaller corridors, Iacovelli devised an ingenious solution to shoot six to 60 feet of corridors. He created a modular design that could wrap behind the other working sets in which a small Steadicam operator could film those long walks with two actors talking.

With an art department staff under him of about 25 people who were usually on call and with set decorators, construction coordinators, painters, art directors and props masters collaborating with him, Iacovelli kept up a high engine activity on a seven-day pre-production schedule.

Iacovelli and his staff were constantly on the move, adapting their work to the needs of the script at hand. "Things happened here so fast," he said. "Sometimes we had a set that we only had one or two days to prep, and so often we just had to make the quick and cheap solution as opposed to the ideal solution."

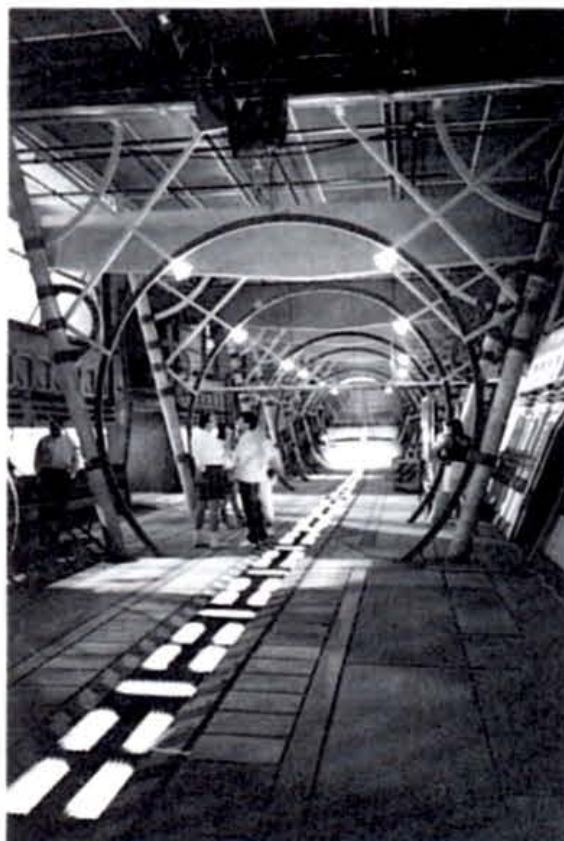
And a CGI solution was often the solution that presented itself to the production staff. Like the space station's Observation Dome which originally was to have been one of show's major sets, but problems arose and the set was only built about waist high for the blue screen stage. The rest of it was added optically.

Occasionally, during the course of reading scripts and going through the "breakdown" process, determining what the set requirements were, Iacovelli felt overwhelmed or excited when new and spectacular sets appeared. He was often relieved when, in fact, those sets were created "digitally" inside the computer by the SFX guys.

"Sometimes that happened, sometimes we got fooled by that," said Iacovelli. "I'd read a script and I'd think that it's going to be something real creative and then it's a

“Things happened so fast. Sometimes we had a set with one or two days to prep. Often we had to make the quick, cheap solution as opposed to the ideal solution.”

—Prod. Designer John Iacovelli—



The station's distinctive main corridor set, built for the pilot at the Santa Clarita Production Center, moved to Sun Valley.

virtual set. On an episode that Adam Nimoy directed, I was very excited about doing some off-Babylon 5 sets. We just couldn't afford them, they were just too big and so we pared it down."

And once the CGI-SFX artists got their hands on those scenes, said Iacovelli, "Even though I was disappointed, when I looked at the dailies it looked terrific, and it looked different, and looked like some other place. So that's pretty great. We really liked that."

Later, new sets were installed to accommodate the series' constantly-evolving storyline. In the early seasons we saw activity in the Casino and when that was phased out, we spent time in the War Room during the Shadow War. With increasing frequency, we visited the Narn homeworld or inside the Centauri Palace. And later, we got familiar with the White Star, a Minbari-Vorlon hybrid battleship.

Even when the script did not call for changes, Iacovelli never let the sets alone. Between seasons, he and his staff would add more and more details to various character's rooms, going so far as buying Garibaldi's Daffy Duck bath towel from the local Warner Bros store, to add depth to the character. He also had all the bridge graphics and signage upgraded, and did total redesigns on standing sets like the sick bay, which had to be completely redone between seasons one year.

"Over the years we added things and changed a little bit," remembered Iacovelli. "It worked well for us because it was a very trademark kind of unusual look. I feel like this looks like my work more than any other show I've worked on. There's sort of an accepted way to do a sitcom set, or a TV movie set. In this show, there were no rules. I felt that I've really been able to give it a visual look that's my sensibility."

"I surrounded myself with a really incredibly good staff. I micro-managed everything and was in charge of every little detail and certainly had veto privileges that way, but I really gave a lot of confidence in my staff to come up with ideas." □

finds Garibaldi's unauthorized Customs Bay entry. Garibaldi tricks Zack with a second Identicaid. A courier gives Lise a vial supposedly containing a cure to a plague affecting telepaths. Two telepathic hit men try to steal the vial and to kill Lise and Wade, but Garibaldi helps them escape. Garibaldi discovers his Identicaid's security clearance is canceled. He realizes their pursuers are telepaths and outsmarts them. The assassins commit suicide before they can be captured. Ivanova begins the Voice of the Resistance stellarcasts using power from Epsilon 3. Sheridan deals with G'Kar and Londo to allow Ranger patrols of their borders.

"Jerry [Doyle] had a blast on that show," said David Eagle. "He loved jumping up to the roof and crawling through the air ducts. When they're being chased by the telepaths, and being trapped in a small room, Garibaldi shoots off a ventilation cover in the ceiling and piled up some of the room's debris so they can climb up. Denise [Gentile] goes up first, then Mark [Schneider]. As Mark goes up, he knocks over the stuff they just piled up. That was not scripted. It was an accident. Jerry could have just stood there and I could have yelled 'Cut!' But I decided to let it play out, see how far would he take it. Jerry just goes, 'Aw, nuts!' He looks up, puts his PPG gun in his belt and just leaps and grabs the ceiling and pulls himself up. Totally unscripted. Unrehearsed. The whole set just broke out into applause. That's what's in the show. It really made the scene. It was between an eight to nine foot leap. I know I couldn't have done it. I'm just glad I didn't yell 'Cut!' before he went through with it. We tried shooting it again but he ended up not being able to pull himself up the second time. He just hung there. It's on the gag reel."



Delenn comforts Lennier, who has prevented the religious caste from poisoning the ship on the way to Minbar in "Rumors, Bargains and Lies."

private flyer, Neroon contacts Warrior caste leader, Shakiri, informing him he has the Religious caste's counterattack plans. On B5, Sheridan deceives the League ambassadors into believing a threat to their shipping is present, so they will agree to deploy Ranger patrols on their borders.

The notion of having an alien society ordered around a caste system started out as a SF device but later, fans wrote to Joe Straczynski and assumed he was a medieval scholar. "That was the structure of that period of time: people were in one of three categories as a rule, worker, warrior or religious caste," he said. "I hadn't realized it at the time, but it definitely fits Minbari society. I also knew that the concept of the One went to the one who was, the one who is, the one who will be, and figured I may as well carry that motif through."

"And... Well, there's just no delicate way to say this. I want your body."
"What! Are you out of your mind?"
"Heh, that's a very funny question to ask a telepath."
—Bester and Lyta

MOMENTS OF TRANSITION ★★★

5/19/1997. #414 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Tony Dow.

Delenn, witnessing the bombardment of Yedor, the Minbari capital, instructs the Religious caste to surrender. Delenn challenges Warrior caste leader Shai Alit Shakiri (Bart McCarthy) to enter the Star Fire Wheel with her. By the ritual's rules, whoever is willing to die for their caste, wins dominance for it. Encouraged by Neroon, he enters the circle with Delenn where the Wheel's energy beam engulfs them. Shakiri suggests sharing power as the beam intensifies. Shakiri escapes when he feels himself burning, but Delenn remains. Neroon renounces his caste, declares himself Religious caste and removes Delenn. He re-enters the circle, sacrificing himself to save her. Delenn reconstitutes the Grey Council, giving the Worker caste the balance of power. On B5, William Edgars hires Garibaldi.

Delenn views the wounded and dying of the Religious Caste during the bombardment of the Minbari capital in "Moments of Transition."



But when Garibaldi hires Lyta he's ordered by Edgars who doesn't trust telepaths, to release her. Unable to find work because she isn't in Psi Corps, Lyta reluctantly agrees to sign over her body to Bester for research after she dies. Earth Alliance attacks civilian targets and blockades the population of Proxima 3.

A rather subtle cameo in this episode was *Dilbert* cartoonist Scott Adams' visit to the station. He becomes a client for Garibaldi, who asked Michael to find his dog and cat (sly references to Dogbert and Catbert from the comic strip). "Scott is a big fan of *Babylon 5*," said John Copeland. "We found out about it, got in touch with him and thought it would be fun to include him in a cameo on the show. We all had a great time. I still stay in touch with Scott on occasion."

"So from now on I guess the operational phrase is 'trust no one.'"

"No. Trust Ivanova, trust yourself...anybody else: shoot them."
—Corwin and Ivanova

NO SURRENDER, NO RETREAT ★★★

5/26/1997. #415 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Michael Vejar.

Sheridan decides it's time to liberate Proxima



A White Star ship crashes into Earthforce Destroyer Pollux as Sheridan seeks to liberate Earth from the tyranny of President Clark.

3, Mars and finally, Earth. The alien races agree to defend B5 after Sheridan nullifies their treaties with Earth. Londo asks G'Kar to sign a Centauri-Narn statement supporting Sheridan, but G'Kar declines. The White Star fleet engages an EA destroyer group led by Heracles' Captain Trevor Hall (Ken Jenkins). Sheridan opens a comlink, pointing out the illegality of Clark's orders, gives his opponents the chance to stand down. Three stand down or withdraw, others including the Pollux fight, and are destroyed. Hall is concerned that Clark will hold him responsible for the mission's failure. Hall's first officer, Commander Sandra Leavitt (Marsha Mitzman Gavin), relieves him of command. Proxima 3 is liberated. The ships Vesta and Nemesis join with Sheridan, while the Heracles retires from the field and another ship stays to guard Proxima. G'Kar changes his mind and signs the joint declaration. Garibaldi leaves B5 for Mars.

Asked how closely does a powerfully written scene on paper, like the one between Londo and G'Kar in G'Kar's quarters, comes to the final moment as played by actors Peter Jurasik and Andreas Katsulas, Joe Straczynski replied, "With those two actors, the result almost invariably looks like what I saw in my head when I wrote the scene. I knew I never had to worry about a Londo/G'Kar scene, and I always wanted to limit the number of distractions in any big scene they had, which is why most of them tended to be in small rooms—elevators, cells, G'Kar's quarters—so nothing else would get in the way of seeing those performances."



New Security Chief Zack Allen and Sheridan interrogate Jerry Doyle as Garibaldi, stripped of his security identicaid in "Conflicts of Interest."

"First, one brief announcement. I just wanted to mention for those who have asked that absolutely nothing whatsoever happened today in sector 83/9/12. I repeat, nothing happened. Please remain calm."

—Ivanova

RUMORS, BARGAINS AND LIES ★★★

5/12/1997. #413 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Michael Vejar.

Delenn, heading for Minbar, invites Alit Neroon (John Vickery) to meet with her on the White Star. Despite their past differences they agree to work together to stop the Minbari Civil War. The Religious caste members who fear that Delenn is planning to surrender to the Warrior caste, weigh their options. Striking openly would divide their caste, so instead they decide to release a residue from the ship's fuel system, poisoning the ship's air supply. Delenn announces that she is not surrendering and that their deaths will be meaningless. Lennier, who overheard their plan, shuts off the gas cylinder, but inhales enough toxin to damage a lung. Recovering, Lennier sees Neroon unexpectedly leaving the ship. From his

SEASON FIVE

In its final year Straczynski turned the focus of the show to empire building, and rogue telepaths.

By Frank Garcia

After triumphant resolutions to the Shadow War and the defeat of President Clark in the fourth season, plus a nail-biting real-life interlude on whether or not the series would be continued, where did BABYLON 5 go in the fifth season? The exciting external conflicts presented by the Shadow War and President Clark could not be duplicated. And so Straczynski turned the conflicts inward—accentuating the rift between “normals” (also known as “mundanes”) and the telepaths and exploring the after effects of the Shadow War.

The basis of the season, in the words of its creator, was “Empire building.” And that meant politics. Most stories dealt with the politics between mundanes and telepaths as well as the covert activities by the Shadows’ minions within the Centauri Palace, activities with repercussions throughout the galaxy. We followed, in considerable detail, the creation of these problems, its fiery apex, and the fateful consequences.

The new galactic alliance now headed by President John Sheridan was given a daunting task when a group of rogue telepaths arrived and requested permission to form a colony. They professed to disavowing violence or technology. Their leader was a tall, blond-haired and broad shouldered man who went by one name: Byron. Played by Robin Atkin-Downes, a British-born actor who gave in his performances a strong, penetrating presence. This telepathic group created considerable chaos inside and outside the station.

“There was so much more story that could have fit in there,” opined series star Bruce Boxleitner. “It did pretty well. We could have gone further with it. Because of what happened with the fourth season, we thought we were going to be canned, Joe had to truncate the epic a little bit to be able to finish it. I think a lot of things had to be dropped to get on with the crux of the story.”

Personally satisfied with the story arc’s content, Boxleitner however, was surprised

to hear fan criticism on the quality of the season’s storytelling. “People have criticized the fifth season as not being as good as the others,” he said. “Well, hey, that’s a matter of opinion as far as I’m concerned. And you know what? In the long run, we got to finish what we got to finish. Whatever the circumstances, we did it and we did it to the best of our abilities. I thought for the most part, everyone delivered what they were there to do. I thought it was fine performances. It wasn’t as exciting to some people. Other people thought it was. We were handed a set of circumstances and what they don’t realize is that the miracle of the show continued in that season. It was a miracle! They’re very lucky to get what they got! There’s some tough talk from Sheridan! It’s a tough business—show business. A lot of people, a lot of heartache and a lot of sweat went into it and they fought for what they got.”

As someone who worked very closely with Robin Atkin-Downes, actress Patricia Tallman was given—to her great delight—a lot of attention. “I was blown away by the amount of work I ended up having and the whole Byron storyline,” said Tallman. “I was honored to be given so much to do. That’s the season where I really feel was some of my better work. I was able to pull together a lot of what I had learned as an actor. I was so comfortable with the crew and my castmates. I kept going to Joe’s office and asking questions. All of us actors were always going to Joe’s office and saying, ‘Oh, God, what does this mean??! Can you give me a hint here?’ And Joe’s always having a conversation saying, ‘I told you as much as you need to know.’ Sometimes it’s fun for me making acting decisions with so little information.”

As the very imposing Byron, Downes was cast after completing a role as a Minbari in the fourth season episode, “Atonement,” and later in the B5 telefilm “In the Beginning.” “I was so lucky with Robin,” said Tallman. “I had a tremendous chemistry with Robin. I liked him. He was funny.

In the final episode, actually filmed fourth season when the series was thought to be cancelled, Sheridan heads off to the rim of the galaxy to die with First One Lorien (Wayne Alexander) in “Sleeping in the Light.”





Wrapping up the epic: Garibaldi (Jerry Doyle), Deleenn (Mira Furlan), Sheridan (Bruce Boxleitner), Lochley (Tracy Scoggins, replacing Ivanova's Claudia Christian), Zach (Jeff Conaway) and Lennier (Bill Mumy).

We teased each other. We could do sexy stuff. But it never got awkward or weird. Like I can imagine it, if it's someone I didn't like. We're really good friends now. We're both organic, Method actors. We rehearsed a lot. That's why my best work is with him. We'd meet at my house, we'd meet early at work. We'd stay late and work on scenes and I think it really shows."

As we were initially introduced to Byron and to his fellow telepaths, and as episodes progressed, Straczynski painted them and their predicament in very sympathetic terms. The viewers were pushed to be on the rogues' side while "normals" remained stubborn.

Answering the question why was it so difficult for Sheridan or anyone to grant Byron's requests, Tallman explained. "For my character, I would say, 'Because we're lepers. No one wants to give us freedom. No one wants us to have the potential to grow. Telepaths all together in one place? What kind of powers could we develop?' People were afraid of them and the whole idea of telepaths banding together in a homeworld is more frightening. What kind of powers could they develop that may affect the universe if you put them all together?"

"Telepaths were made to serve mundanes. That's all they did. They haven't done anything to serve themselves. Psi

Corps was a forum that made sure that telepaths didn't do anything for themselves!"

Aggravating the situation was the fact that quickly, Byron resorted to more sophisticated and immoral means to achieve his goals. "Byron did it in the most unpalatable way," continued Tallman. "He became incredibly unsympathetic to the rest of the alien races when he started holding hostage secrets. They made sure that he wasn't going to get it!"

What's ironic about the fact that Claudia Christian did not return for the fifth season, is that the Lyta/Byron storyline would effectively had been the Susan/Byron storyline had she stayed on the show, according to Joe Straczynski. Ivanova would have become romantically involved with Byron and Lyta would still be there. Lyta's storyline would have ended up the same way by a different path.

In the final result, this arc was so well tailored for Lyta/Byron, it's difficult to visualize how differently the story might have been had Captain Ivanova been present. "I can't imagine Ivanova actually being drawn out where Lyta was," agreed Tallman. "Lyta really followed Byron. Can you imagine Ivanova not getting pissed off and not doing something about [the telepath situation]? I can't! That was the whole thing about

"Nobody takes power. They're given power by the rest of us, because we are stupid or afraid or both."

—William Edgars

THE EXERCISE OF VITAL POWERS

★★★★

6/02/1997. #416 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by John LaFia.

Garibaldi meets William Edgars (Efrem Zimbalist Jr.), in his Mars home. The industrialist affirms that while he and others want to stop Clark, Sheridan's military action is the wrong way because it'll tear Earth apart. He claims he won't turn him over to Clark, but Sheridan must be captured and stopped. Edgars tests Garibaldi's loyalty, sequestering him with a telepath. Edgars questions him from an adjoining room. Satisfied Garibaldi is telling the truth, Edgars then reveals part of his plan. Psi Corps has become a greater threat than Clark who has surrounded himself with telepaths in key positions. Edgars fears a telepath elite will take over, ending privacy, and make normals second-class citizens. Garibaldi will learn the rest of the plan after capturing Sheridan. Lyta manages to bypass the Shadow implants on the altered telepaths after Franklin's efforts fail. Sheridan tells Franklin his plan for the telepaths and orders him and Lyta to leave for Mars.

Casting a veteran actor such as Zimbalist, said John Copeland, was joy for the production. "I believe he was suggested by Fern [Champion] and Mark [Paladini] our casting directors. We met with him and Joe and the rest of us knew right away that he was the man for the job. Efrem was set many weeks in advance of shooting so he could watch a few of the past episodes and also had plenty of time to spend with the script. He knew his lines perfectly when he came to work."

With so much backstory installed as part of his dialogue, was it necessary to explain to Zimbalist B5's plots and situations? "He sold the words," explained Copeland. "An actor doesn't need to know all the context for everything that he says. He just has to be convincing."



Garibaldi meets with Efram Zimbalist Jr. as Mars industrialist William Edgars, who seeks to stop Sheridan's opposition to Earth President Clark.

"President Clark isn't the real problem, he's trivial. One way or another he'll be gone in a few years, but the telepaths he put in power, the Psi Corp, those will be with us forever. That's the real danger."

—William Edgars

THE FACE OF THE ENEMY

★★★★

6/09/1997. #417 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Michael Vejar.

The Agamemnon under command of Captain James (David Purdham), joins up with Sheridan. Garibaldi, working for Edgars, tells Sheridan his father is imprisoned on Mars, luring Sheridan into a trap. Edgars turns Sheridan over to Clark's forces. Edgars tells Garibaldi he plans to enslave

telepaths by infecting them with a fatal virus and by absolutely controlling the antidote. As Edgars leaves, Garibaldi activates a transmitter hidden in his tooth. He boards a tube car and Bester (Walter Koenig) enters. He pulls Edgars' plan from Garibaldi's mind. He also explains what happened to Garibaldi after his abduction. The Shadows took him to adjust him to work for them, but he was re-routed and programmed on Mars by Psi Corps. They made him more stubborn, rebellious and suspicious of Sheridan. Bester leaves Garibaldi's memory intact. Psi Corps murders Edgars and Wade for the virus while Lise Hampton-Edgars disappears. Franklin and Lyta bring the altered telepaths to the Mars Resistance.

To Straczynski's astonishment, director Michael Vejar took an entire day to shoot one scene. On Mars, when Sheridan meets Garibaldi at a dark and noisy nightclub, Garibaldi betrays Sheridan and allows him to be captured. "That was one of those scenes where we all kind of scratched our heads and wondered what the hell Mike Vejar was up to," said Joe Straczynski. "He shot it every way there is to shoot a scene: wides, close-ups, but also fast-motion, slow-motion, off-speed, ramp up, ramp down. He even got the on-set photographer, who had some forensics photography experience, to come in and shoot it with a still camera the way he'd shoot a crime scene. Then we saw the footage cut together, it was utterly electrifying. I've never seen anything like it. I understand now why Mike couldn't really explain it to us verbally, because it's one of those things that can't be explained, only experienced. But we've come to trust Mike and his eye for directing, and trusted him that he knew what he was doing."



Bester and Garibaldi during their fateful meeting in a tube car in "The Face of the Enemy," as Garibaldi learns he has been a Psi Corps stooge.

"No! You have no rights. There's no courtroom here, Captain. No tribunals, no attorneys, no justice, no mercy, no fairness, no hope, no last minute escape. You will walk through that door when you confess and not one second before."

—Interrogator to Sheridan

INTERSECTIONS IN REAL TIME ★★★★★

6/16/1997. #418 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by John LaFia.

Beaten and starved, Sheridan lies in his cell. An interrogator, William (Raye Birk), enters and tells him resistance will be punished and cooperation rewarded. He is told he must sign a confession of sedition against Earth. William offers Sheridan food and he eats, only to be told it was poisoned. After a night of fevered sickness, the interrogator returns and an exhausted Sheridan is restrained in the chair. A Drazi (Wayne Alexander) is brought in who admits to conspiring to subvert Earth's government. He is removed and killed. William offers a typed statement for Sheridan to sign, telling him if he signs, he'll be freed. Strengthened by a vision of



Sheridan, beaten and starved, is interrogated by William (Raye Birk), who tries to bully him into signing a confession of sedition against Earth.

Delenn, Sheridan spits on the paper. William offers him one last chance to confess but he refuses. Guards remove him on a gurney to another cell. Soon after, he's placed in a chair identical to the one before and another interrogator enters, (Bruce Gray), starting the process over again.

"Joe wrote this over the course of a weekend," said John Copeland. "He was hesitant to make the entire show just in the cell and the script had the material with Garibaldi getting captured by the Mars resistance and being freed by Franklin. [We put this into the following episode as it ran short]. But in the end it worked very well. We had originally cast another actor as the interrogator, and replaced him in less than a day. Because Raye Birk was a little uncertain that first day of filming, we progressed so quickly with the shooting that we were able to go back and reshoot the first couple of scenes of the production and improve the performance."

"I don't watch TV. It's a cultural wasteland filled with inappropriate metaphors and an unrealistic portrayal of life created by the liberal media elite."

—Guard to Garibaldi

BETWEEN THE DARKNESS AND THE LIGHT

★★★★★

10/06/1997. #419 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by David Eagle.

Garibaldi is captured and nearly executed by Number One (Marjorie Monaghan), for his treason but Franklin stops her. Lyta scans Garibaldi, taking his memories and places them in Number One's mind, proving his innocence. Franklin, Garibaldi and Lyta free Sheridan but, during the rescue attempt, Garibaldi is stabbed. The Earth ship Damocles' duty officer, Eisensen (Marc Gomes), tells Ivanova that some EA defectors are still loyal to Clark. He warns her that President Clark plans an ambush using an elite destroyer force at Sector 300. Ivanova divides the fleet, some going to free Mars while

Garibaldi and the rebels come up over the rise above Mars' spaceport in "End Game," setting in motion Sheridan's plan to liberate Mars and Earth.



she and Marcus take others to Sector 300 where they find Clark's elite destroyer group, equipped with Shadow technology. When the bridge of White Star 2 is destroyed, Ivanova is seriously injured. Sheridan rejoins the White Star fleet and finds Marcus at Ivanova's bedside. Sheridan tells her she's dying.

For director David Eagle, this is one of his favorite episodes. "Claudia gives such an incredible performance at the end where she's dying. It was also the first time I'd worked with Jason [Carter]. One of the concerns I had was when the pieces of debris hit the White Star and Jason pulls himself out of the debris, there was some debate about whether he was actually going to be able to lift her up and carry her out over all the debris. But he did and that was like one take."

"I was in tears watching Claudia in her dying scene. I remember saying, 'I want you to be really emotional here. You realize you don't have very long to live and this is the end.' And what you see is what she gave. Everyone on the set was just blown away by that performance."



Ivanova faces the Earth Alliance elite destroyer group, now equipped with Shadow technology in "Between the Darkness and the Light."

"We're one jump away from more trouble than most of you have seen during your years in EarthForce and it is my supreme hope that in all the years after this we may never see a day like this again."

—Sheridan to the crew of the Agamemnon

END GAME

★★★★★

10/13/1997. #420 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by John Copeland.

Aboard the Agamemnon, Sheridan plans the liberation of Mars and Earth. The altered telepaths are smuggled onto an Earth fleet led by General Lefcourt (J. Patrick McCormack). A Mars defense bunker is taken by Garibaldi, Number One and the Resistance. Lennier and Marcus open a jump point in the atmosphere, bringing White Star 3 in for low level attacks. From the Martian surface, Lyta awakens the telepaths and triggers their cyberwebs. They disable the 30 warships' computers. Sheridan's main force bypasses the crippled fleet and heads for Earth. Clark commits suicide. A note with the words "scorched earth" is found on his desk. Senator Crosby (Carolyn Seymour) tells Sheridan that Earth's orbital defense platforms are turned toward the planet. All but one platform is destroyed. General Lefcourt's ship destroys the final target. Marcus defies orders and returns to Babylon 5 with the dying Ivanova. Locating Dr. Rosen's alien healing device, Marcus uses the machine to transfer his life energy to save Ivanova.

"I wanted to make the episode one that started moving and never stopped," said John Copeland, who directed. "I think the scenes shot on the bridge of the Aggie are my favorite. Bruce and I discussed them at great length and our goal was to try and imbue them with the feeling on the quarterdeck of a ship of the line during the great

Ivanova. She's this powerful, strong woman who would never blithely go along with Byron."

Tallman's comments suggest that Ivanova's participation would have generated even more conflict in the situation than, say, in the way that Captain Lochley handled the crisis because of Ivanova's latent telepathic abilities.

Christian's departure opened the door for another actress to step through the station's revolving door. After an arduous auditioning process, in which actress Tracy Scoggins (of *LOIS & CLARK* fame) sparred with Jerry Doyle in a shouting match, she was hired as Captain Elizabeth Lochley, a career military woman who fought on the "wrong side" of the war. Her most challenging assignment from the first moment she stepped aboard the station was to deal with the telepath problem. To add a personal connection and a reason why Sheridan chose her for this job, it was revealed that Lochley was actually (briefly) Sheridan's first wife. "She did a great job," remarked Peter Jurasik. "She never tried to step into Claudia's shoes. There was no way she could."

In the middle of the Byron thread, one of the series' strangest episodes was revealed: "Day of the Dead" as written by one of United Kingdom's most popular fantasy authors, Neil Gaiman. Joe Straczynski had been such an admirer of Gaiman's books which included *Sandman* and the BBC mini-series *NEVERWHERE* that he named one of the alien races as "The Gaim" in his honor. It took a very long time, but JMS first asked Gaiman to write for the series in 1992. Because he was so occupied with personal projects, Gaiman was unable to contribute at any time during the first four seasons.

The inspiration for the idea of an alien religion came from a very Earthly religion,

“Telepaths all together in one place? What kind of powers could we develop? People were afraid and the idea of telepaths banding together is more frightening.”

—Actress Patricia Tallman—

explained Gaiman. "I suppose part of it was the idea of an 'Erev'—an almost imaginary line around an area that allows Orthodox Jews to consider themselves in their homes when they aren't, allowing a loosening of the sabbath rules. And the idea that humans would take alien religious ideas as metaphors."

However, "Day of the Dead" is also a Mexican

holiday on November 2, based on the Roman Catholic day of remembrance for the deceased, All Souls Day. And candy skulls, seen on view in the episode, are also part of the celebration.

In the preparation of writing his own B5 script, the production gave Gaiman scripts, videos and answered assorted questions. Out of this research, "Day of the Dead" was constructed. "I found myself becoming more and more impressed by the overall novelistic nature of the show. That it was doing something quite genuinely new for TV," he said.

Gaiman made very interesting selections in his choice of characters that experienced the "Day of the Dead." His reasoning? "I liked what I could do with them," he said. "Londo was on his way to hell, and I felt like it might be a good thing to give him one fine night before it all turned into a nightmare; Garibaldi was a character I wanted to write—and Dodger was the kind of practical character I wanted to bring back; Lennier came for instruction, and would have done well to heed it—and he seemed like a character whose tragic flaw was just waiting to be notched up a little; and Lochley was a blank slate—so I got to make up her past."

Delighted at the opportunity of writing in Penn and Teller as comedians in the far future, Gaiman said, "The idea was to write humor that may be funny then and in context, but isn't as funny to us now."

Critiquing the final production, Gaiman thought it was fine work. "Reminded me of the feeling I got from the last chapter of *Lord of the Rings*. A bit wistful." For him, the acting was overall good, and in fact, Gaiman attended part of the episode's shooting. Specifically, the scenes with Garibaldi and Dodger, and a little bit of Rebo and Zooty. "They were all—cast and crew alike—really cool people," he said.

Asked how did he feel about the fact that with his contribution to the series, Gaiman actually interrupted Straczynski's

age of sail—in battle. I think it worked out well. But the entire episode was fun as well as a challenge, I love working with the SFX and also creating sequences that gave a nod to some of my favorite films.

"I think that Gary McGurk was surprised that his role as President Clark lasted as long as it did."

"Well, Captain, you caused quite a stir. Half of EarthForce wants to give you a kiss on the cheek and the medal of honor. The other half wants you taken out and shot."

—President Susanna Luchenko to Sheridan

RISING STAR

★★★★

10/20/1997. #421 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Tony Dow.

Acting President Susanna Luchenko (Beata Pozniak) compels Sheridan to resign his EarthForce commission. Bester comes to Sheridan, concerned that Carolyn was used in the Mars liberation. Sheridan reassures him that she wasn't. On Mars, Garibaldi rescues Lise from her abductors. After Sheridan's publicly broadcast resignation speech, Delenn proposes a new economic and political alliance comprised of Earth, the Centauri Republic, Narn, Minbar and The League of Non-Aligned Worlds. G'Kar and Londo persuade a doubtful President Luchenko to join the Interstellar Alliance with John Sheridan as President. Sheridan reunites with his father, David (Rance Howard). John and Delenn marry in a private (unseen) ceremony. Franklin rushes back to Babylon 5 where he finds Ivanova lamenting Marcus' sacrifice. She is promoted to Captain and takes a new Warlock class destroyer on a two-year shakedown cruise.

Said producer John Copeland, "I think the most memorable element of this episode was the continuing cat and mouse game that was played between the sides—Delenn, Londo and G'Kar playing their trump card against Earth's agenda."



Londo, Delenn and G'Kar persuade acting Earth President Susanna Luchenko (Beata Pozniak) to join a new galactic alliance headed by Sheridan.

"And I was wondering if they will remember us a hundred years from now, or a thousand. Then I figured: probably not."

"But it doesn't matter. We did what we did because it was right, not to be remembered. History will attend to itself, it always does."

—Sheridan and Delenn

THE DECONSTRUCTION OF FALLING STARS

★★★★

10/27/1997. #422 (501) Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Stephen Furst.

One million years in the future, just before the Sun goes nova, a highly evolved Human (David Anthony Smith) preserves Babylon 5's legacy. Downloading the records, he views random extracts... In 2262, political pundits Henry Ellis,

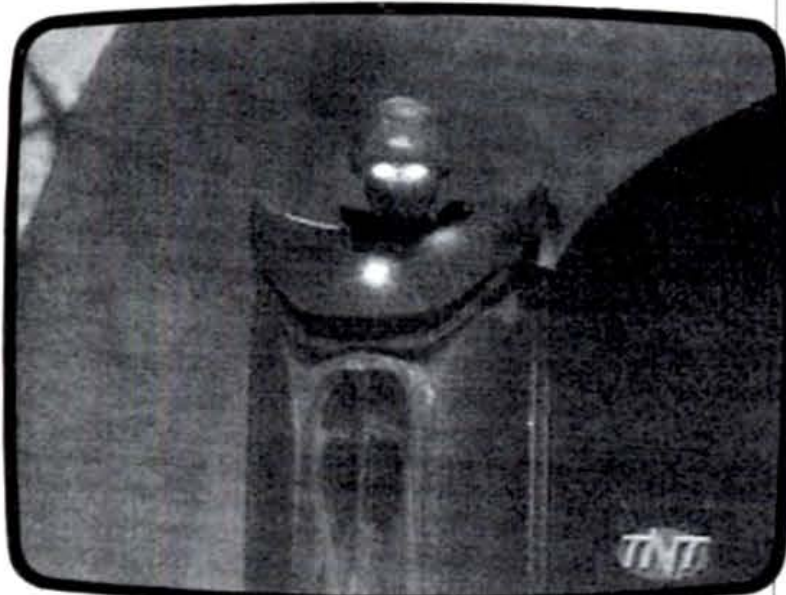
Londo confronts G'Kar, upset that unauthorized publication of his book has led to Narn hero worship in "The Ragged Edge."



Lief Tanner and Senator Elizabeth Metarie (Rob Elk, Bennett Guillory, and Kathleen Lloyd), debate the creation of the Interstellar Alliance. One hundred years later, historians Drs. Jim Latimere, William Exeter and Barbara Tashaki (Alastair Duncan, Nick Toth and Joanne Takahashi), dissect fact from the myth surrounding Sheridan. Delenn emerges from seclusion to defend his memory. Five hundred years later, Earth is divided, half the planet wanting to break from the Alliance. Daniel (Eric Pierpoint), an anti-Alliance extremist triggers an interstellar war. In 3262, the exploits of Delenn and Sheridan are mere legends. Brother Michael (Neil Roberts), a monk dedicated to finding and preserving knowledge lost in the "Big Burn" of 2762, is having a crisis of faith. He and Brother Alwyn MacComber (Roy Brocksmith), await the return the Anla'shok (the Rangers). Brother Alwyn suggests the Rangers have returned and work in secret. When the young monk leaves, Brother Alwyn takes out his Ranger uniform and dispatches a progress report to his superiors. The Human uploads the records to New Earth by tachyon relay. His human form turns into energy, entering a Vorlon-like encounter suit. Out in space, the sun explodes as his ship enters a jump point.

In one of the last scenes of this episode, the human archivist who is reviewing the historical records of Babylon 5 becomes a ball of light and enters a Vorlon encounter suit. What is Joe Straczynski implying? That living beings in the universe evolve from Minbari, to human to Vorlon?

"Lyta, in season 5, mentions that the Vorlon homeworld is off-limits to everyone for a million years," said Joe Straczynski. "The final moments of 'deconstruction' take place—ta-daa—a million years down the road. We have evolved into beings in some ways like the Vorlons, but we have learned from their mistakes. Which is why the one character there has come back, to take all the records of Earth, but in particular these records, to bring to the celebration on New Earth—the former Vorlon homeworld—in order to ensure that we do not make the same mistakes they did."



Highly evolved Human (David Anthony Smith) preserves Babylon 5's legacy one million years in the future in "Deconstruction of Falling Stars."

SEASON FIVE "The Wheel of Fire"

"They say we'll need allies. In particular, a race that is so far unknown to us called humans. If we have not already done so by now, it is my hope that you will work with the Vorlons to find these humans and bring them into the battle on our side."

—Dukhat recording to Delenn

IN THE BEGINNING

★★★ 1/2

1/4/1998 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Michael Vejar.

In the year 2278, aging Centauri Emperor Londo Mollari (Peter Jurasik) sits down with two

unbroken scripting marathon which began at the end of the second season. "A bit intimidating," was his succinct answer.

And what did Gai-man think of "The Gaim," the alien species named after him? "My first suggestion to Joe was that I planned do a Gaim detective episode. I was going to call it 'The Gaim's Afoot.' But he thought that was a silly idea. And so did I."

Viewers consciously became aware that the last pages of this galactic novel began turning in "The Fall of Centauri Prime" and as each of the final five episodes were played out, the fates of each of the characters were revealed. Certain individuals like Sheridan, Delenn and Londo had fairly predictable destinies, but others like Garibaldi, Lennier, Lyta Alexander and G'Kar had very surprising conclusions.

As Londo Mollari, now Prime Minister, returned to his home planet to be anointed Emperor and he discovered the very dark secrets that lurked within the Palace. "It was setting the endgame of Londo's story," said Peter Jurasik. "It was a way to tie up and put things in place so that Joe could take his hand off of that Londo piece on the chessboard and leave it."

Throughout the series we were given brief flashes, hints and prophecies that Londo Mollari would become Emperor. But we didn't learn the detailed circumstances that lead up to this event until "Fall of Centauri Prime."

Just prior to Londo's installation as the planet's new leader, he saved G'Kar's life from the concrete rubble of his dungeon created by the Narn/Drazi bombardment of the planet. Later, the final on-screen moments between Londo and G'Kar, two old foes whose lives became inextricably linked for five years were presented as a quiet conversation between them. Londo urged G'Kar to leave the planet for his safety. As they exchanged their final words, G'Kar intoned, "Mollari. Understand that I can never forgive your people for what you did to my world. My people can never forgive your people. But I can forgive you." They clasped hands awkwardly, staring at each other in silence, before Londo left the room.

According to Jurasik, that scene was not just the final moment for the characters, but for the actors as well. "Occasionally, there's so much emotion around a scene that the scene

"It was Andreas' and my last scene together, we were very emotional. It was the last time we'd work together as these two characters. We were sorry to put it down."

—Actor Peter Jurasik—

doesn't play very well," he said. "I was afraid if there was any scene, that was the scene it would happen."

Jurasik hadn't actually seen the final cut, so he wondered, "I imagine if I were to see it, I would feel that it was overdramatized or there's too much emotion. Because it was Andreas' and my last scene together, we were very emotional about it. It literally

was the last time we were going to work together as these two characters. We were very sorry to have to put it down. I'm hoping it didn't disturb the scene. It was very important to us."

Over the years as Londo progressed, faithful fans often wondered, in the end, would Londo Mollari be redeemed for all of his decisions and mistakes? Surprisingly, Peter Jurasik doesn't think Londo needed redemption. "A number of fans that I've talked to attack Londo, they say, 'How can he do this!' or 'How can he do that?' He is always making every decision that he feels is the best place. He is trying to do what is right all the time. He didn't need redemption or forgiveness."

"But, was he redeemed? Londo sacrifices himself to a Keeper and takes on the role of Emperor. With his mind clearly set that it was for the good of the Centauri, in a sense, he is redeemed."

"I just loved where Joe finished the character. It was completely multi-faceted. You were happy, sad, you're the Emperor, you're in the bottom, I loved the multi-facets."

A similar endgame awaited for Lyta Alexander. Her future was set between "Wheel of Fire" and "Objects in Motion." The Vorlons didn't simply genetically enhance Lyta, they did more. She's the equivalent of a telepathic thermonuclear device.

"She's tremendously powerful but I'm sure there's limits," said Pat Tallman.

Dr. Franklin (Richard Biggs) replaces the eye of Ambassador G'Kar (Andreas Katsulas) in "Meditations On The Abyss."





G'Kar (Andreas Katsulas) finds himself the subject of Narn worship in "Meditations On the Abyss," a Narn crowd scene that proved to be a challenging assignment for makeup supplier Optic Nerve Studios.

"She's being very careful, especially by the end of the fifth season. She didn't need to be in prison. She could have blown them all up. She really didn't want to hurt anybody—inadvertently. That's what Joe kept telling me. He said, 'She doesn't know how to control it. She doesn't want to hurt anyone else.' I thought that was interesting. She's much more compassionate than we even know she is."

In a desire to escape Narns worshipping him for his role in saving their planet, G'Kar purchased his own spacecraft and he brought with him a most unusual companion: Lyta Alexander. Because of her telepathic background, no one wanted her either. Together, they would roam the depth of space, becoming the oddest couple ever.

"I just thought, 'Here we are with a spinoff!'" laughed Tallman. "Lyta and G'Kar in space. They can do a whole new episode right there! I was very pleased that I ended up with G'Kar. What's funny is at one point I said to Joe when we were talking about where Lyta was going, I was trying to get out of him, 'Okay, Byron is now gone, so are his people. What does Lyta do? Why doesn't Lyta take herself along with Byron? Why does she stay alive? She has nothing to live for!' And he said, 'She's charged with taking care of his people. And so they can carry on his dream.' And I said, 'Okay...' and I thought, 'The one person that Lyta would listen to is G'Kar!'"

"It would be nice to have a sixth season to kind of make sense of the fifth season," said Tallman, wistfully. "But since that didn't happen, I hope there will be a chance to do more TNT movies. Tie up some loose ends."

The series does not end with a red bow tied neatly. The decision to conclude the series with new story threads that were cannily planted even as the curtains closed, is a controversial one among fans. Some don't

mind or understand this approach, while others are upset over the realization that these stories may never be resolved.

We saw Lennier betray Sheridan in "Objects at Rest," but did he ever get the redemption he sought for? We saw Lyta and Garibaldi vow to get their revenge upon Bester and Psi Corps for their crimes. And what about the Telepath War? In the third Del Rey book of the Psi Corps Trilogy, *Final Reckoning: The Fate of Bester* written by J. Gregory Keyes, we learned about Garibaldi's revenge against Psi-Corps, flashback to the Telepath War and of Bester's death. Copeland and Straczynski have suggested that the Telepath War could be seen in a future movie.

Valen/Jeffrey Sinclair's final fate, a thousand years ago, is also something else that has not been clearly defined.

In "Sleeping in Light" we learned that Sheridan and Delenn's unseen son David, was training with the Rangers. Bruce Boxleitner reports he's frequently asked about David. "I don't think Joe ever intended to see him," he said.

Straczynski's clear message was that life goes on. It doesn't conveniently stop because the series is ending or when our major characters pass pivotal moments in their lives.

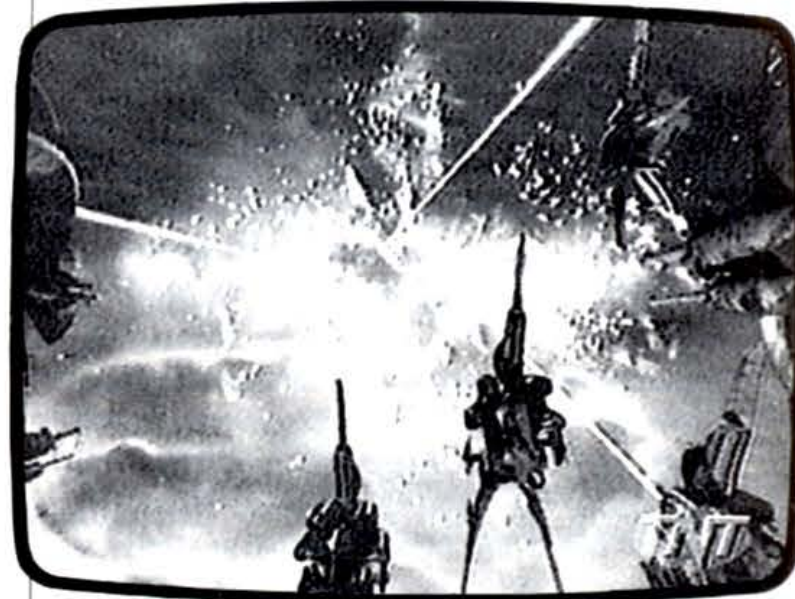
In fact, Straczynski wrote three short stories for *Amazing Stories* magazine. The first caught up with Emperor Mollari on Centauri Prime, the second followed Lyta and G'Kar in a post-series adventure, and the third is still forthcoming.

The universe is so well documented now that there remains myriads of stories that can continue to be told in a variety of mediums, such as books, comics, short stories, TV movies or features. Straczynski has indicated that he has the universe worked out a thousand years in the past and the future. Who knows what the future holds? □

children and tell them the story of how the Earth-Minbari war took place. Intergalactic war erupts in 2247 between the two species when the Earth ship Prometheus encounters a Minbari cruiser with open gun ports. This display is construed as a threat and so the Earth ship fires. Grey Council leader Dukhat (Reiner Schöne) is killed and Delenn (Mira Furlan) casts the deciding vote on returning fire. For the next three years Earth is on the losing side against the Minbari. In one confrontation, a young John Sheridan (Bruce Boxleitner) destroys an enemy ship when his captain dies during the battle. In an attempt at a conciliatory meeting, Sheridan goes with G'Kar (Andreas Katsulas) and Dr. Franklin (Richard Biggs) to the Epsilon system to talk with Lenonn (Theodore Bikel), leader of the Rangers but their rendezvous is sabotaged by Londo. At the Battle of the Line, Earth is on the brink of its final hour until the Minbari takes aboard fighter pilot Jeffrey Sinclair (Michael O'Hare) for examination and torture. And they suddenly, inexplicably, cease their invasion with no explanation. In the aftermath of the war, the Earth Senate decides to create the Babylon Project.

This 90-minute TV movie was finely written by JMS and directed by Vejar. This film was something of a jigsaw puzzle, as it featured sequences previously glimpsed from three B5 episodes; "Atonement," "War Without End," and "And the Sky Full of Stars" and these were moments integrated as part of a brand new story. According to John Copeland, "Joe [Straczynski] has always had the entire storyline worked out in his head. We did slightly embellish some of the sequences—on the Minbari Cruiser carrying Delenn and the Grey Council. There was more material shot for it that further fleshed out the events that Lennier related to Sheridan and Ivanova at the beginning of season two. And we shot new material that combined with Sinclair's interrogation scene that had originally taken place in 'And the Sky Full of Stars.'"

Bruce Boxleitner noted that he had fun with the fact that he was 46 and was trying to be "young Sheridan" in his 20s. "A few weeks earlier I had a full beard and grey hair," he said. "I had to turn it all back. It's not that easy."



"In The Beginning," Earth faces conquest by the Minbari at the Battle of the Line, the TV movie prequel to the series aired at the start of year five.

"You're good with diplomacy when possible, but you know how to fight when you have to. And you speak your mind. Now, whoever's running B5 for the next year is going to be on the hot seat. I chose you strictly on your background. You are the perfect choice."

—Sheridan to Captain Lochley

NO COMPROMISES

★★★

1/21/1998. #502 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Janet Greek.

Just in time for President Sheridan's

B5 CINEMATOGRAPHY

DOP John C. Flinn on making Straczynski's SF epic among the best photographed shows on TV.

By Robert T. Garcia

John C. Flinn's expertise as director of photography brought him constant accolades on B5 including two Emmy nominations, but it was all but invisible to the average viewer. "My compliment is that after somebody sees the show, all they talk about is how great the writing was and the actors were," he said. "I don't like to make anybody camera-conscious. If I have to do that, then I'm trying to sell something other than the words and the acting. That's not the right thing to do. If you get too fancy with the camera, it distracts you. While the audience is thinking, 'What is that camera doing?' one of the characters just made a major story point and they missed it."

In the camera, Flinn misdirected your eye from redressed sets and added mood and atmosphere with his lighting. ("I like mysterious," he said). He set up the live action shots for the special effects guys with lighting for explosions or glowing aliens, faking Martian wind-torn landscapes, framing far shots so they could add ten-story docking bays and much more. He did this while managing his camera crew on three sound stages, handling new lighting systems, and sometimes working with a director's "experimental" in-camera effect (like Mike Vejar's work on "Late Arrival from Avalon").

Flinn made a reputation for sheer professionalism with directors, cast and crew. Peter Jurasik said of Flinn: "He's there at 5:00 in the morning and he's got to make everything work in a real practical, minute-by-minute, scene-by-scene job. He does it all. He coordinates all those personalities to make them run. It's a pretty tight crew and the tribute goes to John Flinn. He knows how to keep us all moving and crack the whip without making us feel like he's a slave driver. How he does that?—that's the



Director of photography John C. Flinn and Janet Russ roll the cameras on "Midnight On The Firing Line," filming the first episode at the end of 1993.

magic of his job."

Flinn constantly gave credit to his crew and the producers. "You need to have leadership like Doug [Netter], Joe [Straczynski] and John [Copeland] and the respect they give us to have a crew like we have," said Flinn. "This is not a typical crew. I have guys who go home and work on their own little movies. Everybody here in their own right are moviemakers, they love what they do. What I receive from them on the set, as director of photography, is all that energy. The attitude is very positive which is really unique, special. You go out there and there'll be four or five people painting, working on sets and doing little checks and gluing this and gluing that and loving it. We only have so much time allowed and we know what we have to do and we do it with class."

From the time the department heads received the script to director's final call of "cut!," Flinn was involved in every episode working closely with both the production designer and the episode's director. Without his help, episodes like "Sky Full of Stars" would never have gotten a go. For that show director Janet Greek wanted a crane for a specific shot, something the producers never

would allow, due to its expense. But Flinn and Greek worked out the simple spot effect that dominated that episode's otherworldly interrogation, hinting that all the action was taking place in Sinclair's mind, and pulling off the cash for the crane shot Greek needed.

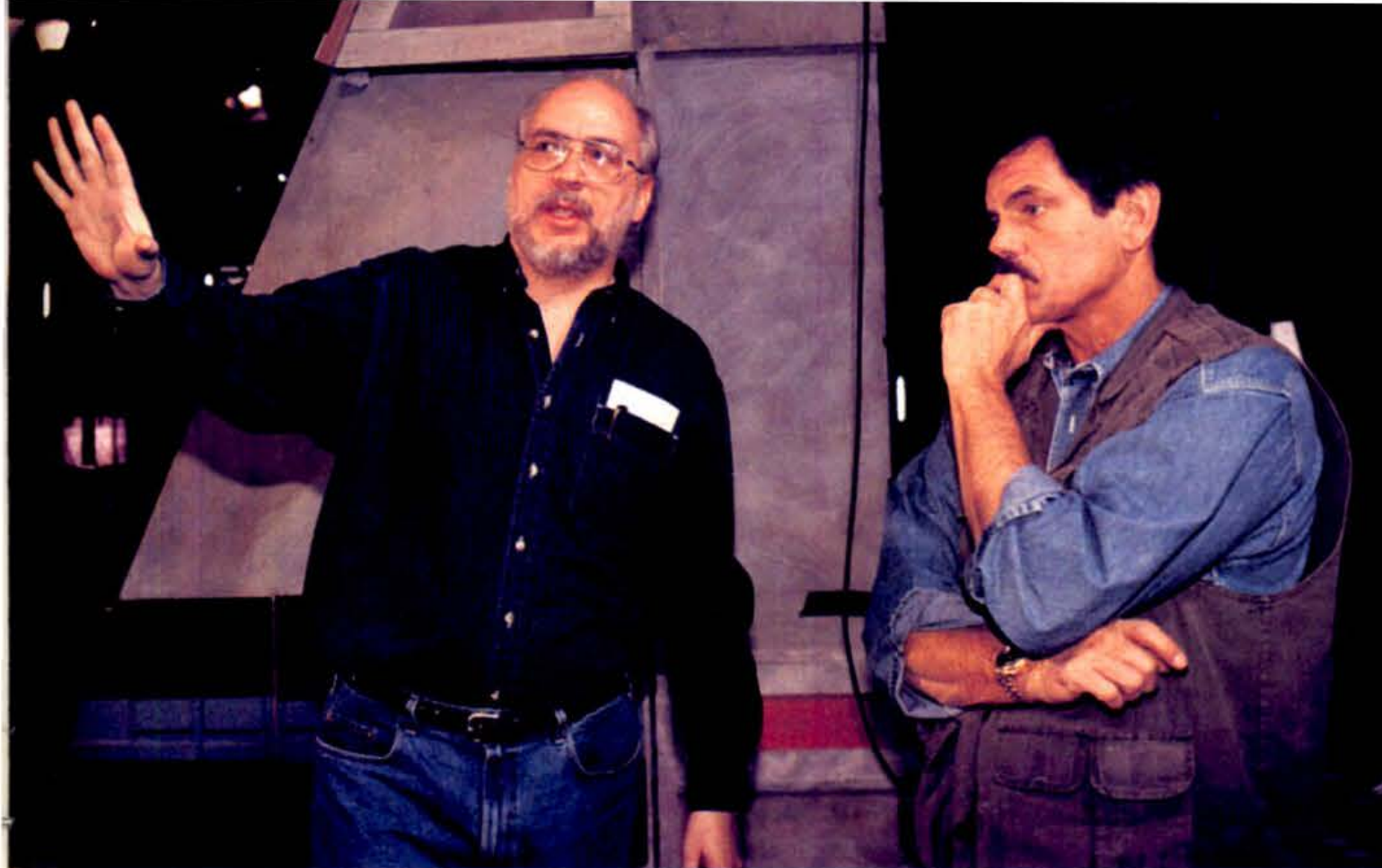
Director Jim Johnston loved Flinn's look for the station: "He does a very good job giving Babylon a look that other space shows don't have and we're not afraid to use a dark look, which a lot of space shows don't want to do, but I kind of like that dark, sinister look and the shadows created by using it."

Once Flinn found the look of the show, he still pushed harder.

"You come to work thinking what can we do today to make it better," he said. "What can we do to make this look a little different, just so it doesn't look like the same old thing you saw last week on the show? I didn't want to name names, but there's a lot of shows out there in sci-fi where you have that same stale look. I don't want anybody to look at BABYLON 5, and just see the overall, and that's the way it's going to be every week."

"I've had the opportunity to direct some of the shows also, and it's great because usually directors have their ideas, how they see it, and everybody wants to try to find a new place. But I'm looking at things from show to show, and I can utilize that when I direct."

Production designer John Iacovelli worked with the DP from the very beginning of every episode. The two went over the white paper models of the sets as they were designed. Flinn worked with his crew to set-up lighting the sets and once they were constructed, the two of them walked the set to see what could be added for best effect. There were no surprises after the set was constructed except pleasant ones. Noted Iacovelli of Flinn, "We love him because he



Flinn breaks in a new director, working with creator Joe Straczynski on the series' final show, "Sleeping in Light," directed by Straczynski to show that the series could meet its new, shorter production schedule.

always wants more sconces and more places to light up, which is great for us because we like doing that kind of stuff. He's always pushing the envelope rather than just settling for what we can do. That's kind of a hallmark of our show anyway, I think, that everybody tries a little bit harder. It's a little bit more interesting."

Once the set was finished, Flinn's crew came in for the final spotting of lights. "I work with my guys as far as rigging accessible lights. Coming onto that set, I do all specials, meaning the etiquette lighting, like if there is a vase of flowers, I want a special light on that. I pick out things that I want to see. I don't want just a wash of light. There are a lot of dippy little things to give us depth and a nice feeling to the shot."

The BABYLON 5 studio also boasted a collapsible blue screen, that saved them a lot of time. Noted Flinn, "It's cut time like you can't believe. The technology is just zooming. It's great, especially for our kind of schedule, we shoot a day's work plus blue screen and we're done within 12 hours." B5 had numerous special effects shots incorporating film elements into elaborate CGI mattes. A lot of people don't understand. They ask me where and how big is the place that I'm shooting, figuring it's got to be gigantic. I love to tell them where we are." The mattes were so effective that the crew never went outside, even for the most elaborate shots: "The furthest we ever got was 30 feet from the stage," said Flinn. "And that was at night, shooting explosions and only because we didn't have room inside. We also had a little beach scene. We had an 8x10 of sand and threw it down and shot Vir."

“This is not a typical crew. Everybody in their own right are movie-makers, they love what they do. What I receive from them on the set, is all that energy.”

—DP John Flinn—

B5 was a testing ground for a new kind of studio, with a lot of the post-production work on the premises. "The great thing is having John Copeland here. He has all the computer stuff and the tapes to show. We have the ability to see exactly what we are going to interact with. Which makes everything much more conceivable."

Much of the action took place as characters moved from one section of the station to the other. "We [did] a lot of Steadi-cam so we can go through corridors, and we'll knock off two or three pages of dialogue sometimes and it's a two or two and a half minute scene, which is a long time on the move. Those are fun things, you're going upstairs, downstairs, around the corridor and into the Zocalo then into the elevator, and it's all in one shot. It's great, you see everybody, you see the whole place."

Flinn gave all the credit to his crew: "You have to have a nucleus of positive people and that's what we have. My operator Peter Kowalski, Wally Sweederman, my first assistant camera man, and Johnson Ford, my second, my gaffer, John Smith, my key grip, Robert Blair. All these guys are on top of it. This is truly a fun place to come to. When we wrap on a Friday night everybody sticks around and talks."

Nowadays, Flinn has traded his five years of working on sound stages for sandy beaches. He has signed-on for THE D.R.E.A.M. TEAM, described as a cross between CHARLIE'S ANGELS and MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE, shooting in the beautiful locale of the island of Puerto Rico and starring Angie Everhart. A far cry from 25,000 tons of floating steel. □

inauguration, Babylon 5's new commanding officer, Captain Elizabeth Lochley (Tracy Scoggins), arrives. A death threat against President Sheridan hangs like a dark cloud over Inaugural ceremonies, prompting Garibaldi and Zack Allan to beef up security. A telepath named Byron (Robin Atkin-Downes) asks for a meeting with Lochley. Representing a group of rogue telepaths, Byron explains they want to form a colony. Meanwhile, G'Kar writes the inaugural oath and the declaration of principles. A young man, Simon (Timothy Eyster), manages to telepathically broadcast the identity of the assassin to everyone at the Inaugural Reception. He dies in the act of saving Sheridan, but the assassin manages to escape. Hopping on a Starfury, the assassin attempts to kill Sheridan during his swearing in, but Garibaldi, in a second Starfury, blasts at him. Grateful for Simon's help, Sheridan allows Byron's people to stay aboard, against Lochley's wishes.

Recalling newcomer Tracy Scoggins' first day on the set of the series, Joe Straczynski said, "Tracy's first day was like anyone's first day: she was nervous going in, but you couldn't really tell unless you looked close. The cast—many of whom had been very upset by Claudia's decision to quit the show over a raise we could not give her without violating our contract with everyone else in the cast—were all very supportive of her, and wanted her to do the best job possible. They greeted her warmly and there was a great sparring relationship between her and Jerry from day one. I think she's the only woman on the planet who's actually made Jerry nervous at times, because she's every bit as strong as he is, and she's phenomenally smart, quick-witted, and resourceful."



Capt. Elizabeth Lochley (Tracy Scoggins) comes aboard to take command in "No Compromises," just in time for Sheridan's inauguration.

"We're all dying 20 years, 50 years, 100 years, doesn't matter. What matters is what we do while we're waiting around and how we live out the seconds in between."

—President Sheridan to Londo

THE VERY LONG NIGHT OF LONDO MOLLARI

★★★★

1/28/1998. #503 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by David Eagle.

Delenn is surprised to learn that Lennier is returning to Minbar permanently. Lennier explains to Delenn that he feels "in the way" now that she is married to Sheridan. Londo, Vir and Zack are at Customs, arguing over the impoundment of Londo's favorite drink when he collapses. Londo was not poisoned but experienced a heart attack as a result of his diet and stress.

Inside Londo's dreams, he encounters Delenn as a darkly veiled woman. She warns him that he's dying. At the Zocalo, he's greeted by Sheridan and they discuss the prophetic dreams that foretold his death. Londo has surreal encounters with Vir and

5 FINAL DAYS

The behind-the-scenes drama, filming the five year saga's last shows, as the cast and crew say goodbye.

By Frank Garcia

When a television series begins, there's excitement and optimism among cast and crew for a satisfying and successful future. As the years roll by filled with highs and lows, long hours, tensions and laughter, when a finale looms ahead, it becomes an emotional time. It's not just the end of a creative effort, it's the end of relationships however not necessarily friendships.

In the case of *BABYLON 5*, the show has uniquely not just one, but two endings. When it looked like there was going to be a premature end, the series finale, "Sleeping in Light," was filmed as the last episode of the fourth season. Later, when TNT commissioned the fifth season, "Sleeping in Light" was held back for a year, and so the true filmed conclusion was its penultimate story, "Objects at Rest."

For Bruce Boxleitner, filming "Sleeping in Light" was such an emotional moment because the story took place 20 years in the future and told the final fate of President John Sheridan.

"Sheridan was saying goodbye and Bruce Boxleitner was saying goodbye," he said. "We were all feeling bitter. Some people were resigned to it. 'Ay, them's the breaks, that's showbiz! We've made it this far!' I know deep underneath, everyone was sad that we didn't get to do the full saga. It's like any job you don't get to finish. You want to walk away from it done. So, it was a strange twist of fate. We all said hello again, but at the time, we all seriously believed that was it."

The Hugo award nominated "Sleeping in Light" was, surprisingly, not an action-filled conclusion, but a very simple tale. John Sheridan awakened one morning and realized that his time was short. Lorien's exten-

sion of his life's essence after his fall into the abyss at Z'ha'dum was losing its potency. Sensing this, Sheridan sent for his closest friends to gather together one more time, for one last dinner.

"You wanted 'Bang, boom, bang!'" said Boxleitner. "Sheridan just wanted to go quietly into the night. I liked it. It's so cliché the other way. The 'bang!' The heroic stuff. It's not real life and what's truer to real life is that sometimes the drama is in the quieter moments. Saying goodbye. Eventually, we all have to say goodbye to this world."

Patricia Tallman recalled the filming of "Sleeping in Light" with strong emotions as well. Although she was not in the episode, she did hang out on the set during the banquet sequence. During rehearsals, in the moment when each person raised their glass in tribute to absent friends, and calling out their names; Tallman was offstage and she instinctively reacted. "I yelled out, 'Lytytt-



Bruce Boxleitner and Patricia Tallman shoot a scene for "Wheel of Fire," one of the last episodes filmed fifth season, an emotional ending for the ensemble.

taaaaa!!' They didn't mention me at all!" she laughed.

In her recollection of the time, the word that best described the mood was "frustration." "Here we were, shooting the last episode and didn't know how it was going to go. We also shot a cover for *TV Guide*. It was important to have that coverage. We were denied that coverage for years. And finally, we get it and we might be off the air. It was very frustrating and aggravating. We had so much to tell. And not to have the chance to finish it when we knew there was a market for it, was very frustrating."

This story was not just about Sheridan's last hours, but the station itself. Decommissioned from active duty, five miles of rock and metal were wired for a purposeful explosion. And fittingly, its director, Joe Straczynski was the man who turned off

the lights. "Joe was angry, I think," said Boxleitner. "That's just my opinion. He was bitter about having to end it, so he wanted to blow it up."

"They decommission ships that way. They used to sink them. Or mothball them and you have a mothballed fleet."

This episode had a weird resonance for Boxleitner. His wife, Melissa Gilbert, starred in *LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE* for 10 years beginning in 1974. In its final episode, aired on February 2, 1984, the town of Walnut Grove was demolished by dynamite. "Michael Landon pushed the plunger and blew up the set," said Boxleitner. "And they filmed it. And they gave it to NBC saying, 'Thank you for ripping our hearts out.' So, in a similar way, it was Joe's way of saying, 'You know, if this is the way it's going to be, there won't be any going back.'"

When Jeffrey Willerth talked about his



Joe Straczynski blocks out a shot for "Sleeping in Light" with cinematographer John Flinn, as the cast stands-by in old age make-up, the series' final show which was actually filmed at the end of fourth season.

experiences, he was sitting in his office, staring at his framed and signed copy of the "Sleeping in Light" script hanging on the wall. "That was a poignant moment. It was an emotional day and episode. We were very proud of our work. At the same time it was incredibly sad. We wanted to keep going. It was like going to the amusement park or the ball game and you don't want it to end. You want to keep doing it."

But *BABYLON 5* did get its reprieve and a year later, as the cast and crew reached its final epoch, as the final five episodes rolled before the cameras, the emotions everyone experienced a year before, resurfaced in full force.

"It started to sink in around the final five episodes," noted Boxleitner. "A lot of us were living in denial, you know? We didn't want it to end! Who does? Nobody wanted it to. But we did know from the beginning there was going to be an ending, had to come to grips with it. Certainly, there was a lot of bittersweet feelings about it. Some people were angry about it. Everybody went at it in different ways. It was the ending of something that was a good time. For some of the kids on the show it was their first time. It was the biggest thing they'd ever been in! For myself, I've been through a few TV series so I do know the end and it's not very good. I hate endings—but they're necessary. You can't go on forever. It's hard to look back and say, 'God, I was there!' That's all you can do."

Boxleitner's memory of the final days

was everyone signing memorabilia for each other, not unlike the high school rituals of signing yearbooks. The film equivalent was signing scripts for each other. "We had a good party," he said. "But see, I knew already I was going on to doing *A CALL TO ARMS*, so...I was looking forward to it. I think we had a week or two off. And then starting up *CALL TO ARMS*, which I then knew was going to be my final appearance for the series."

For Peter Jurasik, the final days felt manic. "You could feel the characters being moved—to use the chess metaphor—into the endgame and to their different spots on the board. And that's where they're going to finish. The work was just engorged with emotion."

"It felt like the final notes of the Fifth Symphony being played. The scenes were grander and longer, the drama was perhaps operatic at times. It was impossible to separate this work with the fact that we were finishing five years of a relationship with the cast and our crew. None of us were prepared. It came too fast. We didn't say the things we wanted to say, or we said too much, or too little, and it was all over."

The best analogy that Jurasik could find to convey his feelings about the series' conclusion was to say that it was "a series of endings." Imagine, he said, saying goodbye to your friends and loved ones at a railroad station. "It was saying goodbye before we got to the railroad station. It was saying goodbye at the waiting room, and then

G'Kar. He returns to Cartagia's Shadow Cabinet where G'Kar was whipped. In fits of weeping and pain, Londo cries out and awakens in Medlab where he sees G'Kar staring at him and he whimpers "I'm sorry..." Lennier leaves with the Rangers.

In one of the most innovative shots of the season, a camera is strapped to Peter Jurasik, in an extreme closeup to provide a surrealistic view while inside Londo's fevered dream. "Everyone makes a big deal about that," laughed Jurasik. "It's no big deal at all! I would become the cameraman. They were very excited about if I would be able to do it. For me, it was nothing. They merely strapped a camera to me. It's very elaborate. It's almost like wearing a flak jacket."

"It was like a Steadicam hung on and facing toward me. I put it on, walk around and it filmed me. I thought it was a lot of fun to do. It was the kind of thing you'd like to do the whole day. I wanted to put it on and drive home. Walk around with it at the mall! It's very weird and strange and I looked odd."

Director David Eagle fondly recalled shooting another scene that involved Jurasik and Stephen Furst. "We're in Londo's mind. Londo is lying down and Vir hovers above him. And then we realize he's not really lying down. He's standing up. That was the way it was described. I thought, 'how do I do this?' We ended up angling the camera to make him appear as if he was lying down and Vir just walks in. But the way the angle was shot it looks like he hovers in from above. Then, the camera rights itself 90 degrees and we realize they're just standing facing each other. I remember Stephen Furst saying to me, 'How did you come up with this? What made you think how to do this?' He was standing there, watching this, because he's a director too. I remember saying, 'It was the only thing I could think of that matched the description in the script.'"



Director David Eagle's fancy camerawork in "The Very Long Night of Londo Mollari," filming sideways as Vir appears to hover above Londo.

"The paragon of animals. Six thousand years of brutality, murder and slavery. An animal doesn't do this to its own kind, but they do it to each other, and they will do it to us...unless we stop them. Unless we find a way to help each other...unless...we...care...for one another."

—Byron to Lyta Alexander

THE PARAGON OF ANIMALS ★★★ 1/2

2/04/1998. #504 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Janet Greek.

Discord erupts among the Interstellar Alliance members over promises and details of the Declaration of Principles. President Sheridan tries to mollify the members. On a distant planet, a Ranger assists a group of aliens under bombardment. Garibaldi suggests using Byron's telepath colony for covert intelligence. Lyta witnesses the Ranger's death when he arrives on the station, warning of the Emphili's desperate

need for help. Garibaldi asks Lyta to assist in recruiting the telepath's help in covert intelligence. G'Kar delivers to Sheridan his latest draft of the Declaration of Principles. Lyta approaches Byron (Robin Atkin Downes), who is angry that she is running other people's errands. With Lyta's help, Garibaldi and Sheridan realize the Drazi government is responsible for the Emphili's situation and exposes to the Alliance their complicity. The Declaration of Principles is signed by all parties. Lyta returns to Byron, anxious to hear more of his ideas.

Writing G'Kar's Declaration of Principles, says Joe Straczynski, was very simple and easy. "There have been moments on B5 where the writing has seemed to come of its own accord, almost a kind of automatic writing, where the characters are speaking and I'm just transcribing what they say. That was one of those moments. I wrote the whole thing in about 15-20 minutes, then looked back at it on finishing, and realized that there was a lot of truth in there, and maybe even something universally important. That happened a lot with B5, where somehow the truth—not necessarily TRUTH, or The Truth, just a small truth—would wander into the room and end up transcribed on paper before either of us knew what was happening. And then it was stuck there."



G'Kar works on the Declaration of Principles for the new Interstellar Alliance in "The Paragon of Animals," a script passage that nearly wrote itself.

"You ever wish you could be out there riding fire with the rest of them?"
"Sometimes yeah... And sometimes no. And sometimes, I wonder what the hell I'm doing here. All this... it's bigger than you, it's bigger than me, it's bigger than anyone should have to deal with."
—Mac and Bo, the mechanics

A VIEW FROM THE GALLERY ★★★★★

2/11/1998. #505 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Story by J. Michael Straczynski & Harlan Ellison. Directed by Janet Greek.

When a probe is destroyed, Captain Lochley is concerned that a hostile force is about to attack the station. She fears for President Sheridan and Delenn's safety. Two mechanics, Bo and Mac (Lawrence LeJohn and Raymond O'Connor), overhear Sheridan and Lochley argue over the President's safety. Bo goes to Medlab and Mac to C&C. Later, in a turbolift, the mechanics witness Lochley and Garibaldi arguing. In Brown Sector, Bo and Mac witness the firefight outside the station from a viewpoint. While running for shelter, the pair find themselves amidst a firefight and Chief Allan takes them to safety. They meet Byron (Robin Atkin Downes) who gives Bo a telepathic taste of what it is like to fight outside in a Starfury. In the shelter, the mechanics observe a conversation between G'Kar and Londo. On their way to Red One for repairs, President Sheridan orders the mechanics to make sure that Delenn enters a Lifepod. But Delenn convinces



Changing format: Straczynski tells his saga from the point of view of two B5 mechanics Bo and Mac (Lawrence LeJohn and Raymond O'Connor).

them that it is as dangerous for her outside than inside. The attack ends when the White Star fleet arrives and engages the invaders.

This episode belongs to a very small club of B5 episodes where its point of view is a departure from traditional storytelling. Joe Straczynski says that there's actually quite a bit of risk in changing the series format, even for just one story. "I think it's necessary to keep you fresh as a writer. My background is originally in theater, and theater survives on reinvention and experimentation. Take a picture, turn it upside down, and you'll notice details about it you didn't see before because your mind became so familiar with the pattern that you only see the pattern after a while, you don't see the fine points."

"The viewers come to expect a certain kind of show after a while, and if you diverge from that, you risk alienating as many people as you excite. But as a writer, I think it's absolutely essential to experiment like that. Sometimes you'll succeed, sometimes you'll fail, but there's nothing wrong with that. I'd rather try something unusual and fail once in a while than play it safe. And all things considered, I think we succeeded far more often than we failed."

"He joined the Anla'shok for the wrong reasons, because of guilt over the death of his brother. He was not looking for a way to serve... he was looking for a way to atone."
—Ranger Master Turval to Delenn about Marcus Cole

LEARNING CURVE ★★★★★

2/18/1998. #506 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by David Eagle.

On Minbar, two Ranger instructors, Master Turval and Durhan (Turhan Bey and Brian McDermott) are called to Babylon 5 and they bring with them two students, Rasteen and Tannier (Nathan Anderson and Brendan Ford). Garibaldi confronts Lochley on her loyalties during the war, leaving her angry and heated. President Sheridan assures Lochley that Garibaldi "will come around"

Minbari trainees Rasteen and Tannier (Nathan Anderson and Brendan Ford) in "Learning Curve," facing human violence on the station.



at the proper time. After interviewing two telepaths for potential covert operations, Tannier is seriously injured in an attempt to save a woman from an attack. Delenn and the others at Medlab agree that it's time for the Mora'dum, "the application of terror." The Rangers gather together in Downbelow and they witness Tannier's personal confrontation with the man who injured him.

With this episode, director David Eagle had an opportunity to work with actress Tracy Scoggins as Capt. Lochley. "She helped fill the void of the loss of Claudia [Christian]. Claudia was a strong female role model and when we lost that those are pretty tough shoes to fill. I think a lot of people probably felt that Tracy was not likely to be able to do that. She's always played much more glamorous female types, not the male-oriented kind of roles. She did a magnificent job. It was different from anything she'd ever done before, and clearly, she managed to conquer it."

"I think the statement that Tracy and the show was trying to make was why can't you be drop-dead gorgeous but also be tough? I think she pulled it off."



Walter Koenig as Psi Cop Bester in "Strange Relations," trying to take custody of rebel telepaths seeking sanctuary on the station.

"Would you like me to tell you what I see Mr. Allan? I see...what is that quaint human phrase? ... the end of the line. My people always know, I cannot tell you why, or how, or where, but I can feel it to the very core of my being. Mr. Allen...this is where it begins to go badly for all of us."
—Londo to Zack

STRANGE RELATIONS ★★★★★

2/25/1998 #507 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by John C. Flinn, III.

Delenn tells Lochley that she understands and agrees with the reasons why Sheridan chose her as Captain. Garibaldi witnesses the conversation. The telepaths sense the arrival of Psi Corps "Bloodhounds" and Bester (Walter Koenig). Garibaldi tries to confront the Psi Cop at the Captain's office, but Lochley has him confined to the Brig. Because Psi Corps are a part of the Earth government, there's little that Lochley can do about Bester but Sheridan orders her to find a way to prevent Bester from taking the telepaths without compromising Alliance policies. When a Centauri liner explodes on departure, Zack speculates that it was an assassination attempt at Londo. Delenn suggests to G'Kar that he become Londo's bodyguard, a task that G'Kar accepts. Bester and his Bloodhounds attempt to secure the telepaths, but Lyta's Vorlon-enhanced powers holds them off. Before Bester can leave with the captured telepaths, Lochley declares the group under quarantine for 60 days to make sure none are carrying viruses.

In this story, Londo acquires G'Kar as his bodyguard on Delenn's suggestion. It seems

meeting on the platform, and then the train starts moving and then it doesn't leave and it stops because it's delayed for 15 minutes. Everyone has to get off the train because of a bomb scare, and then there's more goodbyes on the platform. They're loaded back on and that's what it felt like!"

The final five episodes a year later was similarly unpleasant for Pat Tallman. "Actually, unfortunately, there was a lot of tension with the producers because they were not talking to us about the movies, they were talking about CRUSADE," she said. "They weren't giving us any information. They weren't being very respectful of us at all."

The final five episodes, says Willerth, was more satisfying than "Sleeping." "We had a greater sense of accomplishment because we did achieve the goal. There was a greater understanding. A different level of passion. We had now told the story that Joe wanted to tell. We had completed the arc. We had a greater feeling of accomplishment and closure to the issues. However, all that got lost in the way the producers handled the whole thing. It got muddled with the development of CRUSADE. It was not as clear cut or well defined as most people wished it would have been. The last days of BABYLON 5 were far sadder than they needed to be."

For Joe Straczynski, the opportunity to make "Sleeping in Light" his directorial debut was his own suggestion and his colleagues Netter and Copeland told him to "Go for it!" "I have no particular desire to be a director, but I figured that the experience might make me a better writer," said Straczynski. "Symbolically, 'Sleeping' would be the perfect one to direct, since B5 had already pretty much put the lie to the notion that in TV the writer cannot be an auteur."

"I wrote the script while directing it in my head. By the time we hit the stage, I'd already seen the episode finished in my head. I just shot what I'd already seen. Of all the B5 episodes, this is the one that is absolutely what I envisioned it to be, what I saw in my head when I wrote it."

"My goal is not to embarrass myself or let down the cast and crew. It was designed to reduce millions of people to tears. It did that. I did my job. I'm content."

—Creator J.M. Straczynski—



Patricia Tallman and Jeff Conaway, filming on the Zocalo for "Objects At Rest," the last B5 show to go before the cameras.

to [DP John] Flinn on the monitor, and he got chills."

A revision of a bedroom scene with Delenn also added greater meaning and symbolism to the storytelling. In a scene where Sheridan and Delenn are in bed together, "I'd arranged for the camera to be above the bed shooting down, to have it isolated by black all around to give a sense of it almost floating, that he was on a dark river and would follow it to the end," said Straczynski. "We'd planned one other shot of Mira/Delenn holding his pillow in his absence...and then it suddenly hit me, to show a second shot of that, and then a third, final shot of the bed empty except for the pillow, the empty bed making the most heart-wrenching statement about losing someone."

Straczynski is naturally proud of the work on the episode, it was what he wanted. "My goal was not to embarrass myself or let down the cast and crew by shooting something crummy. It was designed to reduce millions of people to tears. It did that. I did my job, and I'm content."

Being "reduced to tears" was precisely what happened to "the great maker" and the entire cast and crew a year later when the series wound down to its final five stories.

And what did Straczynski learn from the experience? "I learned that I should've done it a long, long time ago. Because you learn a hell of a lot about your cast, and your sets, and the whole machine when you're directing an episode. I learned what sets posed problems that could've easily been fixed in the script stages, what the actors strengths were, how to frame scenes more visually in the script so they play better on the stage."

In the six days it took to film "Sleeping in Light," Straczynski made a few discoveries along the way. In a scene where Sheridan dons his old black/gray Rebel uniform and steps in front of a mirror, a surprising element entered the picture, as reflected in the mirror. "The cross-hatching over Sheridan's shoulder that formed a cross, for instance, that just sorta appeared when the camera was put into position. He stepped into shot, the framing made it appear; he stepped out of shot, it disappeared. I showed it

unusual that these two men, old foes, would be so willing to accept being tied to each other, Peter Jurasik explained. "They have, not just a respect, but a real affection for each other by this time in the story. They knew their fates were tied together. They tracked each other because they liked each other and respected each other as warriors."

"It was the Vorlons. They created telepaths on a hundred worlds. Interfered with their genetic development. Took people from their home worlds and adjusted them over the course of the centuries, because they needed telepaths in their war against the Shadows..."

—Byron, to the other rogue telepaths

SECRETS OF THE SOUL

★★★

3/04/1998. #508 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Tony Dow.

In Downbelow, Byron (Robin Atkin Downes) is confronted by a lurker who strikes him three times. Later, when lurkers beat up a telepath named Peter (Jack Hannibal), Byron's people retaliates against one of the attackers and when Zack discovers Byron at the scene, he's thrown in a cell. Trapped, Byron is unable to prevent more violence by his telepathic friends against the lurkers. Franklin requests complete medical and genetic history from the Hyach ambassador but they are very secretive and extract a promise of confidentiality from the doctor. Franklin learns that the Hyach have systematically exterminated a parallel species, the Hyach-doh, and as a result, the birth rate of their race has dropped. There was something about the Hyach-dohs DNA that was essential to their survival. Depressed that his people won't follow his creed of non-violence, Lyta comforts Byron. They make love and the experience reveals how the Vorlons genetically manipulated her and other species, creating telepaths as foot soldiers in the war against the Shadows.

"You missed a big part of the story if you still think that the Vorlons were good and were really there to help the Forces of Light," said John Copeland. "The Vorlons were no different than the Shadows and ultimately were only interested in furthering their grand plan, in opposition to the Shadows. They represent the two sides of the same coin, outside entities trying to influence the growth and evolution of younger races."



While making love to Byron, Patricia Tallman as Lyta Alexander has a flashback of her genetic manipulation by the Vorlons to create telepaths.

"Never, ever, ever trust a telepath. I swear to you that I'm gonna have that tattooed inside my eyelids."

—Garibaldi to Delenn and Sheridan

IN THE KINGDOM OF THE BLIND

★★★

3/11/1998. #509 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by David Eagle.

When Alliance cargo ships are attacked, Sheridan orders the Rangers to patrol major



Damian London as the Centauri Regent in "In The Kingdom of the Blind," a scenery-chewing performance toned-down by director David Eagle.

routes. Officials at the Centauri Palace are dismayed to see G'Kar as Londo's bodyguard. A high-ranking official, Lord Jano (Ian Ogilvy) meets with the Regent (Damian London) and is mysteriously killed. He's later found hanged, an event that Londo and G'Kar realize is not suicide. Later, Londo and G'Kar survive an attempted assassination and Londo has a strange conversation with the Regent. Byron declares that he will seek compensation from mundanes because the Vorlons created telepaths to serve them. Addressing the full Council, Byron uses their secrets against them. If the telepaths are not given a homeworld, all they hold dear will be exposed. Angered by their tactics, the Drazi attack one of the telepaths. Sheridan reluctantly removes his protection of the telepaths. To prevent arrest, the telepaths barricade themselves within their living quarters.

"He was very interesting and funny to deal with," said David Eagle of guest star Damian London, who was the Centauri Regent. "He had his own take on the character. I think to a certain extent we may have actually toned him down a bit, believe it or not. If I didn't pull in the strings a little bit, he may have gone way over the top."

"After I denied permission to the telepaths who came here to form a colony, President Sheridan overrode my decision. Now, they've walled themselves in Brown Sector."

—Lochley

A TRAGEDY OF TELEPATHS

★★★

3/18/1998. #510 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Tony Dow.

With the telepaths barricaded in Downbelow, and Sheridan occupied with Alliance attacks, Lochley calls Bester (Walter Koenig) for help. To

Lochley crawls through the station's air ducts to get to Byron (Robin Atkin Downs), who has barricaded the telepaths in revolt in Downbelow.



The fact that the series was ending arrived in two stages for him. It was first an intellectual realization, and then later, an emotional one.

"Intellectually, it came where it would logically come, with the writing of the final five episodes, which is where the process of saying goodbye begins [and ends] in earnest," said Straczynski. "Those were very difficult episodes to write.

The two hardest send-offs were Londo and Garibaldi. Both had been there from the beginning, both were leaving to uncertain fates [as far as the characters were concerned]. We usually manage to stay four or five scripts ahead for production reasons, but we went down to about three or four ahead during this period because psychologically I just didn't want to write those episodes.

"Emotionally, I know the exact moment it came home to me. I'd managed to live in denial for a goodly part of it, keeping my mind and my heart separated by barbed wire to make sure the one didn't get the other one upset...right up until we shot 'Objects at Rest.' There's one scene with Sheridan and Lochley in C&C, where he's talking about how hard it's going to be to leave, and I ended up on set for that particular scene. If you watch the episode, you'll see Bruce turn to look behind him (we go to a reverse angle at that moment, that's the shot you want) and as he says, 'It's going to be hard to leave, one gets used to the place,' he's looking right at me, off camera. It was at that precise moment that the reality of the thing ending just hit me like a sledgehammer, and I left the stage at the end of that take."

Describing the atmosphere at the Sun Valley soundstages during the filming of "Objects at Rest," Straczynski observed the varied reactions among his cast and crew to the event. "It was very emotional for everyone involved. Lots of tears and hugs—it felt like a graduating class on the last day of school, with partings inevitable. Some of the cast took it very hard, knowing in particular that CRUSADE was coming up behind, since they didn't understand why they weren't all going over to the new show. But it is a new show, and if everyone went over it'd just be the old show with a new name, and that wasn't the intent. Some of them went very internal on the last few days, which is a very natural instinct. Bruce [Boxleitner] and Mira [Furlan] in particular took it very hard; Jerry [Doyle] seemed okay with it, was ready to move on; [Richard] Biggs had been down this road before

"The two hardest send-offs were Londo and Garibaldi. Both characters had been there from the beginning, both were leaving to uncertain futures."

—Creator J.M. Straczynski—

and was okay; Peter [Jurasik] was raring to go, having done Londo for five years he was eager to do other kinds of roles; Andreas [Katsulas] was Andreas, as unreadable as the Sphinx; Bill [Mumy] was pissed; Stephen [Furst] was okay with it.

"There was the full gamut of emotions you'd expect, especially with actors since every actor believes that they'll nev-

er get another gig."

When it came down to the final day of shooting, the scene filmed was a group gathering at the Zocalo, where Sheridan and Delenn addressed a crowd. It was filled not just with the standard SAG extras but with many B5 production staffers, dressed as humans or aliens. Although Bruce Boxleitner didn't think facing his friends made for a stronger dramatic scene, Straczynski thought so. "Practically everybody was in tears, because we'd made it a good place to work, and nobody wanted to leave. We loaded the place up with extras drawn from every department; everybody's in there...office staff, art and construction guys, wardrobe, makeup. They all wanted to be in the scene. It ended up adding a great deal of truth because when Mira and Bruce say goodbye, they're not just talking to a bunch of extras, they're talking to the people they've been working with for the last four-five years.

"You'll notice one guy walk up to the doorway after Sheridan, Delenn and Lennier exit. That's John Flinn, our director of cinematography for all five years.

"After that final scene, lots of speeches were given, some awards were handed out, everybody ate and hung out. It took some time for some of the cast to come out of their trailers to join in with the eating, for obvious reasons. Again, it was a very emotional time. I slipped out quietly when nobody was looking, not wanting to make a scene, and let the cast and crew have their personal goodbyes.

"It was tough, real tough."

Boxleitner looks on as an Optic Nerve artist touches up Mira Furlan's unwanted old-age makeup in "Sleeping In Light."



get to Byron (Robin Atkin Downes), Lochley crawls through the air ducts and into the Telepath's quarters. She warns Byron that their tactics has everyone tense and that if they don't exit now, there will be deaths forthcoming. Byron refuses. On Centauri Prime, Londo and G'Kar discover that Na'toth (Julie Caitlin Brown) has been languishing in a dungeon for two years since the attack on Narn. They smuggle her out in disguise and whisk her off the planet and back to Narn. The Drazi, the Brakiri and the Gaim argue amongst themselves over who's responsible for the various ship attacks. To prevent them from attacking each other, Sheridan orders the White Stars as a protective force, outraging the ambassadors.

With this episode, Na'toth's fate was finally revealed and resolved. To bring her back, Joe Straczynski asked Julie Caitlin Brown to return for a two-day shoot. The event happened, says Brown, for two reasons. "The fans wanted me to come back and wrote to Joe quite a bit and I let Joe know I would be interested, on a limited basis, to come back because I felt her storyline was just not complete. She was [supposedly] killed off screen from the planet bombing. I said, 'If you want to bring her back and really kill her, I'd be willing to do that.' That seed was planted and then we were in England doing a big convention, and he expressed that if they got to season 5, they would tie up a lot of storylines. His choice was not to have me die on screen but send me off to Narn to recuperate. That storyline is still kind of open."



Lyta Alexander (Patricia Tallman) supports Byron (Robin Atkin Downes), leader of the rebellious telepaths, facing Bester in "Phoenix Rising."

"I thought telepaths were all on the same side."
—Lyta Alexander

"I called you my willow, the strength that will survive me and shelter those who follow. Now, I need you to be strong for me one last time."
—Byron to Lyta

PHOENIX RISING ★★ 1/2

3/25/1998. #512 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by David Eagle.

Psi Corps Bloodhounds capture a few of Byron's telepaths. Byron (Robin Atkin Downes) contacts Sheridan and attempts a resolution but Bester (Walter Koenig) declares, "It's over." Garibaldi confronts Bester at gunpoint and demands a recorded confession of how he telepathically manipulated him, causing him to betray Sheridan. But Bester taunts Garibaldi. The Psi Cop implanted into Garibaldi's mind a telepathic block preventing direct or indirect harm. Byron reveals to Lyta that he used to be Bester's protege in Psi Corps. Telepaths break into Medlab and take Garibaldi and Franklin hostage, demanding safe passage off the station and a homeworld. Sheridan angrily declares that he will not negotiate with the terrorists. Byron offers to surrender all the ones who committed crimes if he is allowed to gather everyone



Penn and Teller as Rebo and Zooty in "Day of the Dead," the Galaxy's funniest comedy duo arrive on the station during a Brakiri religious festival.

together. During the release of the criminal telepaths, a firebreaks out and as Psi Corps attempts to take them, Byron orders Lyta to walk away. He and several others commit suicide by blowing themselves up.

When all of Byron's followers are taken into Psi Corps custody, there's no clear explanation why Bester doesn't also take Lyta with them. "There's no explanation for that stated in the script but I can tell you that Bester did not even want to try that," said Patricia Tallman. "Bester has a sense of the magnitude of Lyta's powers and just doesn't want to try that." In fact, this situation served as a starting point that launched their relationship into a new direction later in the season.

"I liked 'Phoenix Rising' because there were some wonderful colors in the way the character was written and things to play," said Walter Koenig. "Again, Garibaldi confronts me and tries to zap me. I think it was a terrific scene for me. It was very meaty scene and I thoroughly enjoyed having fun with it by the fact that I knew he couldn't. I made some choices that were not necessarily explicit or implicit in the writing but which seemed to work. The whole thing with Bester pretending to be preparing to die, and Garibaldi raises his weapon, and then knowing what's going to happen, that Garibaldi had already been programmed. The way that Bester dealt with that was fun for me to do."

"I think we need a little mystery once in a while. Oh, and uh...speaking of mysteries sir, I have a message for you. It's from someone named Kosh."

"What's the message?"

"When the long night comes, return to end of the beginning."

—Captain Lochley and President Sheridan

DAY OF THE DEAD ★★ ★★

4/01/1998. #511 Written by Neil Gaiman. Directed by Doug Lefler.

The galaxy's funniest comedy duo, Rebo and Zooty (Penn and Teller) arrive on the station and everyone greets them with open arms except Capt. Lochley. Their arrival coincides with the Brakiri religious festival known as "Day of the Dead." For one night, those inside a one-mile square zone in a portion of the station purchased by the Brakiri for the period of the festival, will meet a deceased figure from their past. Inside the Brakiri zone, Londo is reunited with his lost love, Adira (Fabiana Udenio). Capt. Lochley is stunned to discover a teenage friend of hers, Zoe (Bridget Flanery), suddenly appearing in her quarters. Garibaldi is greeted by an old friend in his shower, PFC Dodger (Marie Marshall). Strangest of all, Lennier is faced with Morden (Ed Wasser), the Shadow's agent, who makes a prediction that Lennier does not want to hear: that he will soon betray the Anla'shok.

What would have happened if Sheridan, or

Delenn or even G'Kar had been inside the Brakiri zone? Screenwriter Neil Gaiman mused and replied, "Sheridan—probably himself. Delenn—not sure. There are a couple of great candidates, after all. G'Kar—his father."

For actor Peter Jurasik, this episode was a joy to perform. "As wondrous and fun as it was to have Joe Straczynski write all the episodes for a couple of seasons, when Neil Gaiman or Larry DiTillio wrote an episode, it was really great to have someone else's material to do. I enjoy that more now, going out as an actor doing other people's work."

Jurasik also reported that actress Fabiana Udenio loved coming back as Adira. "We struck up a good relationship," he says. "You can't imagine how nice it is to get paid for having to kiss a beautiful Italian actress all day! I just feel like, 'Life can't do better than this!' They made me breakfast, a cup of coffee, dressed me up in a fancy suit, and then I gotta kiss a pretty girl all day. And then I get a fat paycheck at the end of the day! I must have done something right!"

"I loved that freaky little man who Londo meets outside his quarters. I loved that actor! He was so weird. There were about three or four times throughout the entire series where I acted with people who played aliens that I honestly believed they were truly aliens. These are not actors. These are aliens disguising themselves as Hollywood actors. That guy was one of them! I believed he was from another world when I talked with him. When I looked into his eyes, he had completely absorbed himself into this character. When I met the actor, I couldn't believe how different he was!"



Garibaldi lands on the Drazi homeworld, seeking help from a friend to find a witness to the random attacks on Alliance ships in "The Ragged Edge."

"All my life, I have been responsible only for myself. When I risked, I risked alone to avoid making others pay the price for my mistakes. They want me to show them another way... What if I show them the wrong way? What if they come to me not because of the lesson, but because of the teacher. I worry, Ta'Lon that my shadow may become greater than the message."
—G'Kar to Ta'Lon

THE RAGGED EDGE ★★ 1/2

4/08/1998. #513 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by John Copeland.

Ambassadors are no longer attending Council meetings because of the random attacks on Alliance ships. In one attack, a lifepod successfully ejects from a ship before it's blown up. To find the pilot who can provide testimony, Garibaldi suggests to Sheridan that he travel to the Drazi homeworld to locate an old friend who can help find the survivor. Upon meeting his contact, Garibaldi falls asleep drunk. A terrorist attack kills his friend and then three hooded robed figures beats up and kills the pilot. Garibaldi escapes before Drazi authorities can arrive. G'Kar is horrified to discover that Ta'Lon has taken the

Book of G'Kar and has published half a million copies. Narns aboard the station and the homeworld now worship him. Upon return to the station, Garibaldi reveals his only clue is a button torn from the attackers, which Londo confirms is a Centauri Palace Guard button. Franklin is offered and accepts an important position at a Research lab at EarthDome at the end of the year.

Producer John Copeland reports that actor Jerry Doyle didn't feel "one way or another about what was going on with his character. This was what Joe wrote and his job was to perform it believably. We didn't talk about it too much before the episode. But Jerry and I did work out a couple of things during the shooting of how to play the frustration of his character losing his edge and getting his friend killed."

"Well, you've made it past the first stage. You might just be the Psi Corps material after all. Now, let's go home. It's good to know that some stories do have happy endings once in a while."

—Bester, to Psi Corps trainee Lauren Ashley

THE CORPS IS MOTHER, THE CORPS IS FATHER

★★★ 1/2

4/15/1998. #514 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Stephen Furst.

At Psi Corps headquarters on Mars, Psi Cop Alfred Bester (Walter Koenig) gives a tour to two new recruits, Lauren Ashley (Dana Brown) and Chen Hiku (Reggie Lee). But when telepath Jonathan Harris (Dex Elliott Sanders) commits a murder, his movements are traced to Babylon 5. Bester and his recruits depart to retrieve him. On the station, Harris uses his telepathic abilities to win cash at the casino. In a desire to show initiative, Lauren and Chen compete with each other in their search for Jonathan. However, in the Downbelow, Chen is stabbed to death by a lurker who has been following Harris. Reviewing Harris' training tapes, Bester and Lauren realize that Harris has multiple personalities. In a confrontation with Harris, Bester is shot in the shoulder. Taking their prisoner back to headquarters, Bester allows Lauren the privilege of spacing Harris in the middle of hyperspace.

"It gave the audience a chance not only to see how the Corps operates but to understand Bester's behavior from his point of view," noted Walter Koenig. "We get a peek at Bester's approaches to his life and where his loyalties lie. And how strong his loyalties are to his own people. If there's any question before this, certainly there isn't after 'the Corps is Mother' that Bester has feelings that we can identify with. A sense of loyalty, a sense of empathy."

"Joe expressed some question as how the audience would feel about this episode. Would they feel like it was a violation of the approach they had become used to. Whether they would protest the fact the show was from the point of view of the Psi Corps. Curiously, from what I

Denise Gentile as Lise returns to visit Garibaldi (Jerry Doyle) in "Darkness Ascending" and discovers that he has begun drinking again.



Big Brother's POV: Walter Koenig as Psi Cop Bester, breaks-in new trainee Chen Hiku (Reggie Lee) in "The Corps Is Mother, The Corps Is Father."

could gather, from the response I've gotten from making appearances around the country, it was an episode that people really enjoyed. They did not feel that it was inconsistent. They were not upset by the episode."

"I said that I would never leave you...that I would be here when you needed me most. Tell me what you want done. I will make it happen, no matter the cost."

—Lennier to Delenn

MEDITATIONS ON THE ABYSS

★★★

5/27/1998. #515 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Michael Vejar.

Delenn covertly meets with Lennier in Downbelow. She sends him on a secret mission among the Rangers to patrol the Centauri borders, to look for evidence that may point to those responsible for the attacks against Alliance ships. On a Ranger training mission, Lennier and Findell (Martin Cast) discover they have little oxygen supply in their fighters. To survive, Lennier recommends a meditation trance to conserve air. The White Star returns to save them before oxygen runs out. In one exercise fighters dodge among an asteroid field. Lennier realizes that Findell is set on committing suicide by crashing. By skillful flying, Lennier saves his training mate from disaster. Londo and Vir discover a "bug" was planted among their groceries from a Drazi merchant. Angered by their invasion, Vir confronts the Drazi shopkeeper, who denies knowledge of the device. Taking a sword from Londo's quarters, Vir angrily hacks away at the Drazi's cart before security restrains him. Londo decides that Vir will become the ambassador to Babylon 5 when he becomes Emperor.

In a rare moment of conviction, we witnessed Vir take on a sword and single-handedly destroy a Drazi's marketplace. According to John Copeland, adjectives of "weak" or "timid" are not appropriate descriptions of Vir's character. "Vir is unsure of himself and lacks confidence," he said. "I have seen many people have a moment of epiphany about their capabilities and be transformed from that point on."

Delenn hugs Londo reassuringly.

"What...What is this for?"

"I have never done that... in all the time you and I have been here, and I think very soon I will never have another chance."

—Londo and Delenn

DARKNESS ASCENDING

★★★

6/03/1998. #516 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Janet Greek.

Garibaldi has a terrifying dream of the Zocalo in ruins and in which Lyta appears before him, declaring that she will test the limits of her Vorlon-enhanced powers. Lise (Denise Gentile) returns to visit Garibaldi and she discovers that he's drinking

again. Despite his repeated assertion that he will quit, Garibaldi secretly drinks from a flask. Lennier reports to Delenn that he's intercepted Centauri-coded transmissions during Alliance ship attacks. Just as the White Star is recalled to B5, Lennier escapes in a shuttle to discover the secret base of the transmissions. Floating in hyperspace, he finds a signal and discovers Centauri ships engaging in the attacks. He records the attack and escapes with his evidence. Lyta visits G'Kar and reactivates a deal that was initially offered in "The Gathering" when G'Kar asked for genetic material from telepaths so Narns can create their own. In exchange for this information, Narn will provide for the telepaths' transportation.

In Garibaldi's dream sequence, we see Lyta Alexander's glowing white eyes as she straddles on him in bed. In previous episodes we've seen her eyes turn totally black. For an explanation of the differences between the white glowing eyes and the black covered eyes, John Copeland said that white represented when the Vorlons had possessed her and black represented when the Shadows were interfacing with her.

"In desperate acts of ego we give ourselves names, fight over lines on maps, and pretend that our light is better than everyone else's."

—Delenn, to Sheridan

AND ALL MY DREAMS, TORN ASUNDER

★★★

6/10/1998. #517 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Goran Gajic.

Sheridan finally reveals to Council members the hard evidence pointing to the Centauri as the guilty party responsible for the attacks on Alliance ships. Londo denounces the presented evidence. But Lennier's holographic recording of an attack stuns everyone including Londo, who then prepares to leave for the homeworld. G'Kar accompanies him once again as a bodyguard. Arriving on the planet, the Alliance declares war and G'Kar is placed under arrest because he's on the Advisory Council. Unwilling to see G'Kar imprisoned, Londo winds up in the dungeon with him. Sheridan worries that a confrontation between Alliance members and the Centauri is inevitable.



Londo denounces the council's hard evidence that the Centauri are guilty of attacks on Alliance ships in "And All My Dreams Torn Asunder."

As the series progressed, the key description for Londo Mollari became isolation. He was isolated from his friends on the command staff and because he spent so much time on the station, he was also distant from the dark machinations of what was going on inside the Centauri government. Isolation begat ignorance. Doesn't Londo try to find out what's going on? Doesn't he have his own spies? "He does, but the problem is that there's only so much time in an hour—more like 43 minutes—of TV, and to spend that time on inquiries that would essentially come back without resolution would take time away from other, more interesting scenes," said Joe Straczynski.

B MAKEUPS

Optic Nerve's John Vulich on working alien prosthetic wonders.

By Frank Garcia

The Optic Nerve Studios story began after the B5 pilot, when a different company, Criswell Productions, had initiated the makeup designs for all the alien ambassadors. The producers weren't happy with their work, as they were mostly an animatronics/prosthetics company and so they wanted a change. Arriving for the series, Optic Nerve swiftly modified numerous designs, notably Delenn and G'Kar.

"There was a lot of work we really liked on the pilot," said John Vulich, president of the Emmy-winning makeup supplier. "It was pretty apparent that they were rather rushed on a lot of it. It didn't quite have a certain level of finish on it. Their paint job had a lot more detail and depth to it. We tried to simplify the paint job. To make it more practical, on a day-to-day basis throughout the series. We came up with ideas like using vacuformed briskets, like paint briskets, to mask off the spots, so we could do it more like an assembly. We were trying to do G'Kar more realistically."

The initial notion of an androgynous Delenn from the pilot was discarded in favor of making Delenn a female. "They wanted to go with what they did in STAR TREK's 'The Menagerie' where they had women and tried to make them look masculine," said Vulich. "They were trying to do the same thing with the Minbaris, 'Are they men or women?' I thought they were interesting ideas. The im-



Caitlin Brown as G'Kar's aide Na'Toth, a makeup crisis first season when another actress got last-minute claustrophobia.

pression I felt was no one was pleased with the way the androgyny of the Minbari turned out. They were willing to dump that idea. The relationship between Delenn and Sheridan is far more interesting than an androgynous Delenn!"

In "Chrysalis" and "Points of Departure," Straczynski played up the intrigue of Delenn's entrance into the cocoon. What would emerge? "Joe likes to take you into territory that's filled with cliché and then turn it around," said Vulich. "Or, he'll use audience expectations of what they've seen before, in clichés, and take them in a totally different direction, making them fresh. Placing Delenn in the cocoon, you assumed something dreadful would happen, but instead, it was more of a butterfly thing. Joe does that a lot. It's one of his trademarks."

As he grew to know all of his "rubber-headed" players, Vulich came to admire their stamina and abilities of acting under the makeup. "Andreas is one of those actors



Will Huff touches-up Andreas Katsulas as G'Kar. Vulich admired the stamina of his "rubber headed" players, and their skill at projecting under makeup.

who is very good at what he does. One of the keys to an actor being able to act under prosthetics is their awareness of their face and what they're doing with it. The producers consistently hired actors with a theatrical background. I believe there's a discipline that theater actors undergo where they have to develop to the audience members in the front row and the last row, and yet be able to do the performance so it's powerful enough to reach the last seat and yet not overpowering the first row, because nobody wants to overact or go over the top.

"There have been times when G'Kar is over the top but the show gets big and sympathetic at points, and Andreas goes into areas that are operatic but that's appropriate for that moment. He's done some very subtle stuff."

When Vulich saw Londo's hairdo for the first time, did he think it was funny? Vulich responded with gales of laughter. "I wasn't sure what to make of it!" he said. "The character is quite goofy and jovial in the pilot. You started off thinking this was a nice, jolly alcoholic guy and meanwhile, he was going to be the Hitler of the universe!"

Vulich vividly recalled Susan Kellerman's brief B5 appear-

Vulich touches-up Lorien's makeup while filming "Sleeping in Light," the finale.





Wayne Alexander as fifth season's Drahk.

ance as Na'Toth, G'Kar's thorny aide-de-camp, one of the series' major makeup crises first season. "She came down, sat down on the chair. And immediately was nervous, I did the best I could to make her feel comfortable. She was as patient as she could be." But, alas, once the makeup was completed, the panic set in and "she immediately went to the producers, and said, 'I can't do this. I have to take this off.' For some reason I think she was very claustrophobic and uncomfortable. So we took the piece off. And I think she felt very bad. I think she was very embarrassed by the situation." Vulich recalled that the producers were very sensitive to her.

Recalled Caitlin Brown, who replaced Kellerman in a rush, "I went in there and there was such an aura of panic in that room. The girl who had the big claustrophobic attack, you could still feel her energy in the room. I just remember sitting there and saying, 'Look, I've worn prosthetic pieces! It's no big deal!' But this one was so encompassing. It covered your entire face. The only part of my body exposed to air was my lips! Everything else was covered including my eyes! With the costume, and my hands,

everything! Everyone kept running into the room saying, 'Are you okay?!' It took some getting used to and I actually started a yellow panic, I said, 'Oh, I don't know if I can do this!'"

Since the makeup's claustrophobia had ben too much for Kellerman, Babylonian Productions compassionately released her from the job and as a result were left with a casting emergency. Brown had previously auditioned for both the Ivanova and Delenn roles and was well known to the producers and casting director Mary Jo Slater.

"As a child I had worn a backbrace for three years," continued Brown. "It was a fully encasing body brace. I knew if I could live through that, I could do this." And for five episodes of the first season, Brown was Na'Toth. However, because of the enormous demands that makeup and latex placed upon her very delicate skin, and the salary they were paying her, Brown also departed from the role.

"Caitlin was amazingly good in the part," said Vulich. "I'm sure if Susan did the part, she would have been exemplary, but Caitlin was wonderful. She's very boisterous, very alive. She has a very solid and strong personality. She was very good, if not equal, to Andreas in performance."

Because Na'Toth was needed for subsequent episodes, actress Mary Kay Adams picked up the character for second season. "When Mary Kay came in, I think she was a little bit too demure to pull that part off, we needed someone with a little more strength behind it." Adams' portrayal wasn't what the producers wanted, and so Na'Toth disappeared from the landscape until Brown returned to resolve the character's fate in fifth season's "A Tragedy for Telepaths," when G'Kar and Londo discovered her languishing in a Centauri dungeon.

"We have to hit the ground running to design a character and you're not allowed to second-guess yourself. Sometimes the first idea is strongest."

—Makeup designer John Vulich—

Looking back at his Emmy-award winning, five year journey with *BABYLON 5*, Vulich said that he's been so busy on jobs with various television series today, that he felt that it would take a few more years for him to realize what the show meant for him. "I haven't had time to reflect. With any endeavor, there were tough parts and parts that float very freely. It's been a

very good experience for us. As a kid I always wanted to do two things: Something like *KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER* and now we're working on *BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER* and *THE X-FILES*, which are *NIGHT STALKER* descendants. I always wanted to do something like *STAR WARS* or *STAR TREK* and *BABYLON 5* and *CRUSADE* are those shows. I feel very fortunate that those wishes came true.

"But the show's probably more far-reaching in ways I won't realize. John Copeland told me a great anecdote involving a young man with Multiple Sclerosis or something, at an English *BABYLON 5* convention. They auctioned off a producer's tour of the *BABYLON 5* sets and this kid scraped together every dime he had, yet someone else beat him out and he was very disappointed. He was desperate. They took this kid backstage and told him, 'Look, anytime you want to come by, we'll give you a tour,' and he was all excited that he got out of his wheelchair, almost dancing when he heard this and John was almost in tears. John said he then realized *BABYLON 5* was going to be the most important thing he would work on in his life, in the way of what it means to people and how it affects their lives. It's like *STAR TREK*. It develops a life as it goes on."

Working on the series taught Vulich valuable lessons. "I've learned to deal with a TV schedule, to be better about decision-making because there's no time to vacillate," he said. "We have to hit

the ground running to design a character and you're not allowed to second-guess yourself. Possibly one of the most detrimental things as an artist is your own ego and insecurities. The more you're allowed to dwell on something, the more you may water an idea down. Sometimes the first idea is strongest. It's your intuition telling you what to do. From then on, it can be second-guessing and doubt. We just have to do it. We've done some very solid work because of that. Go for your first instinct!" □

Optic Nerve sculptor Mario Torres poses with his work on the Surgery Alien.



"That's why we couldn't figure out a strategy behind the random attacks. We couldn't see a goal because there was no goal. There was no strategy beyond alienating everyone in the Alliance, turn them against the Centauri so that... so they'd attack."

—Sheridan to Franklin and Lyta

MOVEMENTS OF FIRE AND SHADOW

★★★★

6/17/1998. #518 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by John C. Flinn, III.

Sheridan tells Lochley that the Centauris are now targeting enemy jumpgates. The White Star fleet will now engage on any hostile Centauri vessels. Sheridan asks Delenn to propose to the Grey Council to begin a joint Earth-Minbari project for a Destroyer Class White Star fleet. But she must go in person to Minbar to make the request. She leaves with Lennier aboard a White Star but an attack in hyperspace leaves the ship disabled. Vir asks Dr. Franklin and Lyta to retrieve Centauri bodies from the Drazi homeworld. Londo is abducted late one night from his dungeon and is probed by strange aliens. But he awakens back at his cell and believes his experience is a nightmare. G'Kar manages to get them out of the cell. Londo's pleas with Centauri ministers to move against the Regent (Damian London) is ignored. Sheridan takes the White Star fleet to Centauri fearing that the Narn and Drazi are headed for an attack. Lyta and Franklin discover Shadow "pods" used as remote control devices by enemies so the Alliance would turn against the Centauri. The Regent tells Londo that he's sent all defensive ships away on a false emergency and has turned off the planetary defense network.



Ivanova and B5 squadron fighters discover an enormous alien object in Hyperspace in "Thirdspace," B5's third two-hour TV movie.

Hyperspace by Ivanova (Claudia Christian) and Babylon 5 squadron fighters. They tow it to the station for examination. Interplanetary Expeditions (IPX) sends Dr. Trent (Shari Belafonte) and Bill Morishi (Clyde Kusatsu) to work with Captain Sheridan (Bruce Boxleitner) to learn about the mysterious secrets of the object. But the artifact's presence has a fantastic effect on Lyta Alexander (Patricia Tallman) who regresses into a telepathic trance and is uncommunicative. Sheridan and Delenn (Mira Furlan) discover from Lyta that the object was created eons ago by the Vorlons. Meanwhile, people aboard the station are becoming increasingly violent and eventually all-out barfights break out. To prevent total chaos and destruction, fighter squadrons attack the object, hoping to destroy it. Realizing there's only one recourse that will work, Sheridan dons a spacesuit and fires himself into the object. He plants a nuclear bomb and manages to escape before the explosion and everything returns to normal.

Taking place in early fourth season, *THIRDSPACE* is an exciting stand-alone adventure. As a film, several elements resembles *STAR TREK THE MOTION PICTURE*.

"I call *THIRDSPACE* Lyta's bad hair day!" declares Patricia Tallman, laughing. "She's really stressed out, sweaty or bloody! Lyta's out of her mind once again!" What was most vivid for Tallman in making this film, was that it marked a newfound recognition and respect from a television network. "*THIRDSPACE* was the first movie we shot for TNT. It was so wonderful to have the TNT staff around. They had a lot of new publicists and their representatives were coming down and hanging out with the producers [who] were so excited about being part of the TNT team. It was great, instead of being Warner Bros' bastard stepchild—which we were—they paid no attention to us whatsoever. TNT came out and spent more money in publicity for *THIRDSPACE* and *IN THE BEGINNING* and the series than Warners did in four years! It was just remarkable!"

A last-minute filler scene between Tallman and Jeff Conaway turned into a favorite moment in the film for fans and actors alike. It was a successful moment because it was both funny and poignant. It's a scene that took place inside a turbolift. Standing alone, Lyta Alexander was totally stoned by the gigantic artifact's presence, and then Security Chief Zack Allen walked in. Momentarily stuck in the lift and oblivious to Lyta's desperate, sweaty condition, he awkwardly confessed his love for her. He tried asking for a date, but when Lyta doesn't respond, Allen takes that as rejection and then leaves, disconsolate.

"People keep asking me how did I keep a straight face in the elevator with Zack?" said Tallman. "I said, 'Because it wasn't funny to me!' People say to me, 'Oh, how sad, she's missing the opportunity of a lifetime with this man...' but inside [herself] she was contemplating on the Vorlons' influence. I thought Jeff did an amazing job. Jeff literally had

to run it the night before. He had like three pages of dialogue. Came in and did it word perfect in the first take. He was amazing!"

For Bruce Boxleitner, *THIRDSPACE* was a fun film that gave him something different to do. Throw on a spacesuit and save the day. "I always enjoyed those parts wearing those damn awkward space helmets," he said. "But they were fun. There was an exciting battle sequence and where I was flying through it all. That made it different inside the artifact, quite interesting."

Asked if he noticed any allusions between *THIRDSPACE* and *ST-TMP*, Boxleitner replied, "That's fine! Why not? Doesn't matter! As long as you enjoyed it, I don't care."

John Copeland remarked, "*THIRDSPACE* is a different kind of B5 story. It starts off one way and then moves into the area of horror. It was fun to play with those aspects and I think the difference of the telefilm from the series was refreshing to the viewers."

"It's called a Keeper. They become part of you. They can control you...but only when their interests are at stake. You'll be free to do as you wish the rest of the time..." —Regent to Londo

THE FALL OF CENTAURI PRIME

★★★★

10/28/1998. #519 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Douglas E. Wise.

As the Drazi and the Narn bombard Centauri Prime, Londo frees G'Kar from the rubble of his cell. He discovers, to his horror, that the Drakh, minions of the Shadows have been secretly manipulating Centauri affairs. They maneuvered the Alliance into attacking the Centauri. Because of fusion bombs planted across the planet, Londo is forced to cooperate with them. With the Regent's death, Londo has the perfect alibi for all the recent attacks. As Londo becomes Emperor, he acquires an alien parasite, a "Keeper" around his neck, controlling his thoughts and actions. Centauri fighters locate Delenn's disabled White Star and brings her to the homeworld where she reunites up with Sheridan and G'Kar. They witness Londo's holographic inaugural speech to his people. They leave Londo behind to a world in ruins and rubble.

This episode marked the final appearance for the Regent. Actor Damian London, said Peter Jurasik, "was the quintessential senior member of the guest cast. He's an actor who's been around for a long time. When you spend the day with him, he was an actor who was giving, taking, teaching all at the same time. I felt it was an honor to be working with him. He likes to play things so strange, offbeat and unsettling. That's the way Damian approached the character all along. The way a jazz person might play a note offbeat. He liked to bend. Damian would always take the high road or the low road. He just did that naturally. He was just the right person to cast."

Londo in the courtyard of the palace on Centauri Prime, named Emperor but now a puppet of the Shadows in "The Fall of Centauri Prime."



Strange aliens abduct Londo from his cell with G'Kar on Centauri Prime late one night and probe his mind in "Movements of Fire and Shadow."

One of Pat Tallman's favorite memories in the making of the series were sometimes very small scenes like the one contained in this episode. "There were small victories like when you really felt good about a take," said Tallman. "Rick Biggs and I are supposedly on the streets of Drazi, trying to find a hotel. We created something more than Joe had written. Joe had written something like 'Franklin and Lyta try and find a hotel.' We turned it into a whole scene. We had so much camaraderie. It's a remarkable chemistry."

"We would touch the face of God, and in so doing, become gods ourselves. But a door swings in both directions. We didn't stop to think what we might be letting in."

—Lyta Alexander's Vorlon race memory to Sheridan and Delenn

THIRDSPACE

★★★

7/19/1998 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Jesus Salvador Trevino.

An enormous, alien object is discovered in



"What no one has stopped to consider is that in a war you need to have a certain number of small weapons, a certain number of medium weapons and one or two big ones. The kind of weapons you drop when you're out of the small weapons and the medium weapons, and you've got nothing left to lose."

—Lyta Alexander to Garibaldi

WHEEL OF FIRE

★★★★

11/4/1998. #520 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Janet Greek

G'Kar arrives back on B5 to find many Narns chanting and worshipping him. At last the command staff becomes aware of Garibaldi's drinking problem and places him on suspension. G'Kar realizes that he can't go home either because they want to give him unwanted leadership. Orders arrive from Earth to question and arrest Lyta for terrorist attacks on Psi Corps. At the Zocalo, she's arrested, slugged and taken to the Brig. Lochley tries to help Garibaldi with his problem by discussing her personal experiences. When Delenn faints, Franklin discovers that she's pregnant. Garibaldi asks Lyta to remove his neural block placed by Bester in exchange for her freedom. In a counterproposal, Lyta will use Edgars Industries funds to bring down the Corps, and in two years Lyta will remove Garibaldi's neural block so that he can deal with Bester directly. Garibaldi also learns that Lyta was modified by the Vorlons as a superweapon. Meanwhile, G'Kar proposes that he leave Babylon 5 with Lyta as both of them are unwanted.

After Byron's death, Lyta carries on the work in his name, but is she betraying his benevolent, non-violent ideals by wreaking havoc back on Earth with terrorist acts against Psi Corps? Patricia Tallman explained, "They did violence but they're not harming anybody. It's violence towards rocks and glass," she said. "They're not trying to hurt anybody. They're making statements. It's one of those fine lines, isn't it? She's justifying it that way."

Trivia: The title refers to a quotation from Shakespeare's *King Lear*. "I am bound upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears do scald like molten lead." It is meant to describe Byron's legacy and Lyta. It also applies to Londo.



Lyta Alexander is arrested for carrying on Byron's legacy in "Wheel of Fire," and conspires with Garibaldi to bring down Psi Corps.

"There is strength enough in one mind, one soul to change the universe. Can you imagine how much strength there would be in one billion souls, all focused on escape?"

—The Soul Hunter

A RIVER OF SOULS

★★★

11/8/1998 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Janet Greek

When archaeologist, Dr. Robert Bryson (Ian McShane), discovers one of the Soul Hunters' hidden caches in a dig, he brings one of the



Martin Sheen as the Soul Hunter in "A River of Souls," philosophically the most challenging of the B5 movies, questioning the nature of the soul.

thousands of glowing globes to Babylon 5 for study. But that's just when Garibaldi (Jerry Doyle), now in charge of Edgars Industries, arrives to confront Bryson about the funding for his secret research. Angered by the archaeologist's intrusion into their secret lair, a Soul Hunter (Martin Sheen) arrives on the station demanding their property be returned. But that's just when Bryson manages to make contact with the billion souls from the planet Ralga, trapped within the globe. Captain Lochley (Tracy Scoggins) is faced with the prospect of the station being invaded by the globe's inhabitants, who were captured before their death, who's only motivation now is anger and escape from their prison.

Meanwhile, a holobrothel run by Jacob Mayhew (Joel Brooks) slaps a lawsuit against the station for harassment and slander.

Briefly, the Ralga souls inhabit the holograms from the holobrothel but then Lochley realizes their true plan is to sabotage the station's reactors so that they, and everyone aboard the station, can die. The situation is resolved when the Soul Hunter bargains with the Ralgans, to accept his life so that others may live. In the end, Lochley returns the globe to a visiting Soul Hunter, who promises their colleague's sacrifice won't be in vain.

Philosophically, *RIVER OF SOULS* is the most challenging B5 movie. It questions the nature of the soul and what afterlife might bring. Martin Sheen is well cast as the Soul Hunter. We haven't seen him in a SFTV project since the original *OUTER LIMITS*' "Nightmare." Ian McShane is also well cast and delivered an appropriately obsessive performance as the archaeologist. But the Holobrothel sub-plot, particularly the scenes with the "love bat" comes off incredibly flat for B5. The idea of a humorous "B" story is nice but maybe a different story could have been chosen.

According to John Copeland, "It's a very different story for us. It doesn't involve space battles and bad aliens. It all takes place onboard the station. I think it is a really good *BABYLON 5* story. It's actually quite different. It's got a good adventure saga and a very humorous 'B' story. It's very funny at moments."

The producers were also very pleased with the acting delivered by their regular and guest cast. "Martin Sheen did a wonderful job," marvels Copeland. "He wasn't really familiar with the show and had to watch some past episodes to get the feel for it." Sheen was originally offered Bryson's role but after reading the script, Sheen was so taken by the Soul Hunters, their unusual dialogue that he asked for and was given the role. McShane was cast thereafter.

"Ian McShane, as the archaeologist who stumbles across one of the worlds where the Soul Hunters keep their soul caches, was a really good performance," continues Copeland. "And of course Jerry, Tracy and Jeff Conaway and everyone else is up to their usual performances. It's very good and kind of a change of pace. We

don't have a big space battle in this one at all."

Asked what is it about Soul Hunters that has made a one-episode appearance so popular, Copeland replies, "I think the fans responded to these mysterious characters who travel the galaxy searching for important 'souls' to preserve against death. The episode from the first season was intriguing and left many interesting facets of the Soul Hunters unanswered as far as who and what they were. However, the fact that they are obsessed with collecting souls is a pretty interesting notion."

"This telefilm gave Joe an opportunity to flesh them and their order out more. As far as their popularity, I'm never sure what makes fans respond to one character over another. I think the fact that Morgan Sheppard did such a great job creating the character that he resonated with our viewers."

"Because of my growing abilities, I can't go home and I can't stay here...so I may as well go with you. It's ironic. You have to leave because everybody wants you, they're fighting over you...and I have to leave because nobody wants me."

—Lyta to G'Kar

OBJECTS IN MOTION

★★★★

11/11/1998. #521 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Jesus Salvador Trevino

Number One (Marjorie Monaghan) of the Mars Resistance arrives on B5 to warn Garibaldi and Lise that they're targeted for assassination. G'Kar meets with Lyta to discuss their departure together. To find the assassin, Zack develops a plan in which a going-away party will be held for G'Kar to flush out the killer. Sheridan offers to help the Mars Provisionary Government with a diplomatic office. During the ceremony, the assassin is captured when his stolen Link feeds back. But a Narn worshipper of G'Kar gets off a shot at Lise who winds up in Medlab. Taking the assassin to Lyta, Garibaldi learns that the entire board of Edgars Industries sent the killer. When Lise wakes up, she agrees to marry Garibaldi. Lyta and G'Kar leave the station together. To clean out the Edgars board, Garibaldi blackmails each of them and orders their resignation or their secrets will be exposed. To them, he introduces Number One as the new head of Covert Intelligence for the Alliance. When Garibaldi leaves, Sheridan and Delenn take a full tour of the station before their departure for Minbar.

Patricia Tallman revealed a very interesting anecdote that happened during Lyta's final scene in the series. "During one of the takes, walking away from the camera, when we're walking down the ramp towards the spaceship, G'Kar grabs my ass," said Tallman. "I laughed! Our backs were to the camera so they would have seen his hand but they wouldn't have seen my face! So, anything

This is the beginning of a beautiful relationship: G'Kar and Lyta discuss their plans to leave the station and explore the universe together.



B5 COSTUMES

Designer Anne Bruice-Aling on clothing a science fiction universe.

By Frank Garcia
and Robert T. Garcia

It is said that clothes reveals the personality of the person who wears them. For BABYLON 5 costume designer Anne Bruice-Aling, that best described her job, which was to accentuate and reflect the personalities of the many humans and aliens that populated the space station.

Although Catherine Adair (of MANN AND MACHINE fame) was the costume designer for "The Gathering," and initiated many of the familiar designs, Bruice-Aling joined this galactic repertory company for its five-year life. One of Bruice-Aling's first design modifications from Adair's wardrobe was adding that leather strip to the front, collars and waistband of the EarthForce uniforms.

"Joe has a [series] Bible that he wrote that has the background on what the Centauri race is and what kind of people they were, and what their history's been," noted Bruice-Aling. "The same for the Minbari, the Narns, Earth Force, and Psi Corp and all of that. I tried to honor, in some ways partially, the kind of silhouettes that had been established [from the pilot]. What I tried to do was get from Joe the most that I could get in terms of [finding out] what is the strongest definitive look we can give to the Minbari, or to the Centauri, and the Narns, and keep them separated so they each have their own kind of quality to them."

"The Centauri became a classic imperialistic statement, even more so as we went along. It stayed that way although Londo went very dark, his purple coat to navy, his gold bouil-

lon to pewter, and his colorful vests to all blacks and grays, very rich still, but very somber because he became the dark character."

When it comes to the Minbari, their clothing is very Oriental, almost Japanese. "Delenn has that very strong Asian quality to her, but she evolves, particularly into being more human," said Bruice-Aling. "She's a Goth Asian and in a way that hasn't ever been seen before in a very simple kind of way. Delenn has made the biggest [change] because she went from the pilot as being very androgynous with the make-up and even the voice. In the first season we tried to make her much more feminine, but still no hair, completely Minbari. We had the pajamas and kimono and the tabard and it was scaled down to fit her. In Joe's mind, this is a fairy tale and she's the princess."

It takes a special kind of actor to play an alien. Elaborate facial prosthetics added a burden to their performances but there's also the clothes, which very often were cumbersome, hot and heavy.

A tolerant actor such as Andreas Katsulas made the best use of these two burdens. Bruice-Aling noted, "[Andreas] always told me that he loves it because he can't possibly be Andreas anymore. It makes him

Andreas Katsulas and Mary Kay Adams as Na'Toth. Besides the makeup trials, Bruice-Aling noted that the Narn costumes were cumbersome, hot and heavy.



Bruce Boxleitner and Claudia Christian wearing the station's new uniform design season four, once B5 declared its independence from Earthforce.

stand a certain way and it makes him carry himself a certain way.

"Actually, Mira and Peter have also been like that. I'm fortunate that the three alien characters that I work with who have to deal with the most period or heavily laden kinds of stuff have appreciated it. Peter always used to tell me, 'Just give me more! The more gunk I've got on me the more I understand who Londo is.'"

In "Ceremonies of Light and Dark" the command staff received sleek, black and grey uniforms. The new uniforms were a symbol of independence against President Clark's evil puppetry. "Joe really wanted the uniforms to have a rebel-like quality," explained Bruice-Aling. "It's because they are going through a very, very dark time. The black came straight from Joe. It was always in his mind that they would be forceful. What I did with it was to take that idea and try to keep it not so far afield from the Earthforce uniforms."

Ultimately, working on the series was satisfying for Bruice-Aling. "They gave me a lot of liberty in terms of what I did. There was an infinite amount of trust in me in terms of fabric choices and combinations and the fact that the decisions that we made as a wardrobe department. We had a pretty good track record, but as far as making decisions and character development and all that, I didn't make a move without having chats with Joe about it." □

can happen! Andreas was just goofing."

"So, what do you think?"

"It's beautiful, I really had no idea."

"Yes, it's good to be home."

"Home. During the war, if you told me someday I'd call this place home, I've said you were crazy. But, now...it feels right."

—Delenn and Sheridan, arriving at the new Alliance HQ at Tuzanor

OBJECTS AT REST

★★★★

11/18/1998. #522 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by John Copeland.

Sheridan paces in C&C just as he prepares to leave Babylon 5 for their permanent Alliance headquarters at Minbar. Ta'Lon finds a message from G'Kar, appointing him as the new Narn ambassador. Franklin picks Dr. Hobbes (Jennifer Balgobin) as his replacement in Medlab. On Mars, Garibaldi appoints a group of troublemaking middle managers as the new Board of Edgars Industries. Sheridan and Delenn, now with Lennier, depart from Babylon 5 in an emotional, public farewell. During their journey to Minbar, an accident traps Sheridan and a Ranger in a room filling with toxic gas. Lennier hesitates from opening the door and runs away. But Sheridan uses a Minbari fighting pike to save his life. Ashamed by his betrayal, Lennier escapes in a shuttle pod. On Minbar, Sheridan and Delenn are surprised to find Emperor Mollari waiting for them. During dinner, he gives them a sealed, ancient Centauri vase, which apparently contains a dormant Keeper, to be given to their son on his 18th birthday. Lennier calls Delenn and expresses sorrow for his actions but vows that one day he will return, redeemed of his actions. In the middle of the night, unable to sleep, Sheridan records a message for his future son.

"The mood on the set was nostalgic and a little sad. This was the end of something that we all had invested quite a bit in," said producer and this episode's director, John Copeland. "We all knew that we were really at the end this time, as opposed to the end of Season Four, where we thought we probably weren't coming back. And the storyline of the episode was about folks leaving and others staying and carrying on. Which was also what was going to happen in reality—as many of the crew would be staying around for CRUSADE, but others would be moving on."

"At the same time everyone had a really good feeling as well, as we had accomplished what we set out to do—tell a five-year story for television and we had succeeded regardless of our detractors and other hurdles and obstacles along the way. We had become an extended family. We'd always have our experience to share down the years and 110 episodes and five TV movies."

Note: The quote lines above were actually scripted, but a decision to cut them was made and the music score underpins the arrival scene instead.

Delenn and Sheridan arriving at the New Alliance Headquarters at Tuzanor in "Objects At Rest," the last episode of the series filmed for Season Five.



The series ends: Sheridan and Delenn watch the sun rise in "Sleeping In Light," the final episode of the series, actually filmed Fourth Season.

"Babylon 5 was the last of the Babylon stations. There would never be another. It changed the future and it changed us. It taught us that we have to create the future...or others will do it for us. It taught us that we have to care for one another because if we don't...who will? And, that true strength sometimes comes from the most unlikely places. Mostly, though, I think it gave us hope that there can always be new beginnings...even for people like us."

—Entil'zha Susan Ivanova's closing narrative

SLEEPING IN LIGHT

★★★★

11/25/1998. #523 (422) Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by J. Michael Straczynski.

In 2281, President Sheridan awakens one morning and feels his time has grown short. Delenn sends out letters to his closest friends for a reunion. The Rangers deliver the messages to Garibaldi and Franklin on Mars, General Susan Ivanova on Earth and Centauri Emperor Vir Cotto, summoning them to Minbar. At the banquet, each pay tribute to absent friends. Delenn offers the job of Entil'zha (Ranger One) to Ivanova and she accepts. After an emotional farewell, Sheridan leaves Delenn for Babylon 5. Sheridan is dismayed to discover that the station is being decommissioned since their work has outlived the station's usefulness.

Heading out for Coriana 6 in a White Star, Sheridan prepares himself for his oncoming death. He is greeted by his old friend, Lorien. A brilliant flash of light brightens and darkens in the spaceship's cabin. Sheridan's friends attend to the final ceremony of Babylon 5's explosive destruction.

"Toward the end of season four the possibility of a fifth season was raised, though it was a distant hope," recalled Joe Straczynski. "We'd have to shoot in six days instead of seven. Some on the crew said it couldn't be done, some said it wouldn't make any difference because on nine days out of ten we wrapped early. You take those one-two hours per day that you wrap early, put them together, and ta-da, you've got a full shooting day."

"So I told Doug and John that I would shoot 'Sil' in six days, to show it could be done. If I, a first-time director, could shoot it successfully in six days, anybody could. It was a risky thing to do, but I did it anyway. Doug and John asked several times if I wanted to take that risk, but I have a simple philosophy that to live is to risk, it's unavoidable. It added an extra layer of pressure to the job, but you just take that and you move on."

"Listen...No birds, no animals, no voices, no machines, no insects, starships or music. You are hearing the sounds of a dead world—a murdered world...A test. Can you imagine? All this for a test."

—Technomage Galen to Sheridan

A CALL FOR ARMS

★★★ 1/2

1/3/1999 Written by J. Michael Straczynski. Directed by Michael Vejar.

Five years after leaving BABYLON 5 for Minbar headquarters, President Sheridan (Bruce Boxleitner) inspects two of the Alliance's newest

prototype warships, the Victory and the Excalibur. He has an encounter with Galen, a Technomage (Peter Woodward), who shows him the dead world of Daltron 7. In the demonstration of the new fighter craft, Sheridan and Garibaldi (Jerry Doyle) learn that to use the main guns, the ship has to recharge for one minute, leaving the ship defenseless during battle.

When Sheridan realizes that the Drakh, the Shadow's minions, are about to attack Earth with a Shadow cloud left over from the Shadow War, he alerts Earth's defenses. Helping him on the mission are Durena (Carrie Dobro), an alien thief who is the last of her race, and Captain Anderson (Tony Todd), an Earth Force commander who takes the helm of the Victory. When the Drakh arrives to attack Earth, a fierce battle ensues. The Victory is destroyed in a moment that bought Excalibur the extra time it needed to blast the Shadow cloud and prevent Earth's destruction. But a heavy price is paid: the enemies dropped a biologically engineered plague, a virus that will kill everyone on the planet within five years unless a cure is found. The Excalibur now becomes a research vessel with a mission to scour the galaxy for the cure.

A CALL FOR ARMS is what John Copeland calls "a transition film" between BABYLON 5 and the new series CRUSADE starring Gary Cole. Carrie Dobro and Peter Woodward are two characters introduced here who are CRUSADE castmembers.



The Drakh are back in "A Call To Arms," the TV movie that linked BABYLON 5 to followup series CRUSADE, set five years after the end of B5.

Well-written and directed, A CALL FOR ARMS also presents a new composer, Evan Chen, to the B5 mythos. His compositions bring a very welcome change and new excitement to the film. The most intriguing character is unquestionably Peter Woodward's portrayal of Galen, a Technomage. His demeanor, his British descent, presents a mysterious, alluring quality to the character. Galen's presentation of a dead world to President Sheridan is haunting and serves well to demonstrate the character's powers.

As Durena Nafeel, Carrie Dobro also brings an exotic flavor to her character and her personality adds to the ensemble.

John Copeland said that all aspects of this film interested him. "I looked forward to what Joe was going to do storywise," he says. "He and I had long discussions on the evolution of the Excalibur. In fact, there were several months of design that we went through before we arrived at the finished look. Joe wanted something that would have a distinctive silhouette and look very cool. We were also interested in taking the visual effects to a different level. Make them feel different from what we had done on B5. That process took a while to get to, but I think we were finally really hitting our stride in the later episodes of CRUSADE. Also, the composer was a challenge. We found him from listening to his demo that was submitted to us for consideration. Joe was trying a different style of storytelling and a new story. We wanted a new look and a new sound to go along with that." □

JOE STRACZYNSKI

With customary wit, style and panache, the saga's creator reveals that there's "life" after BABYLON 5.

By Karla G. Von Huben

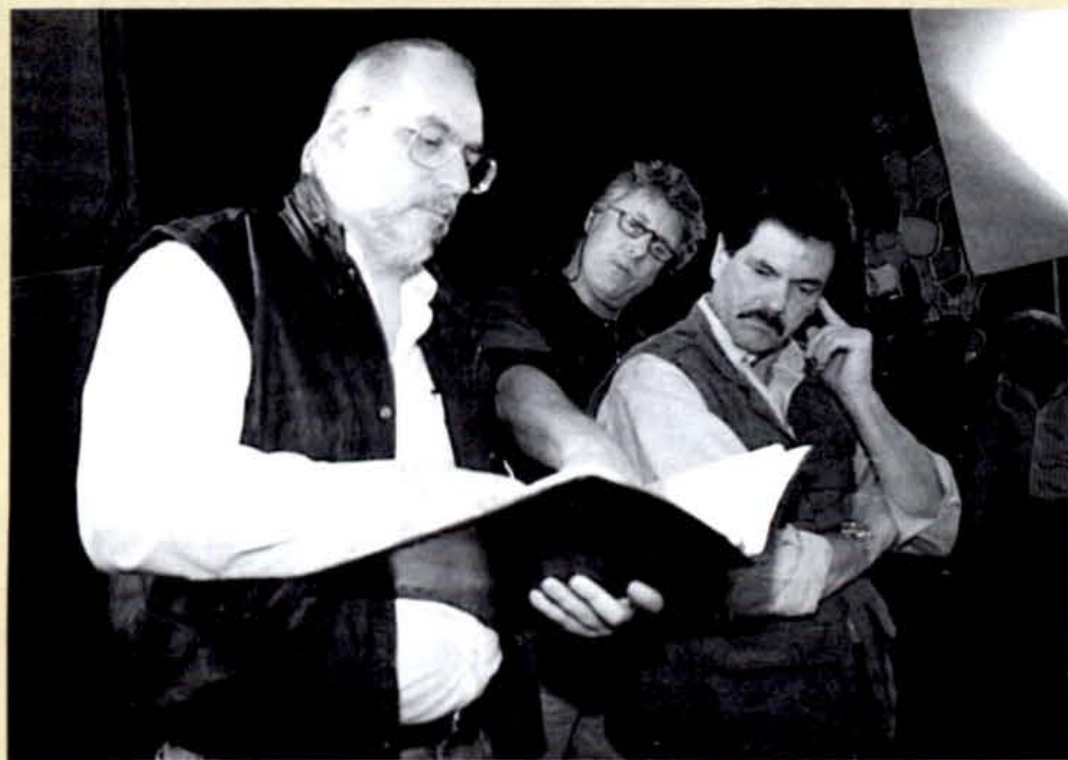
J. Michael Straczynski, prolific writer, enthusiastic visionary and self-described "pain in the ass," held sway at last year's San Diego Comicon by running a skillfully edited trailer featuring scenes from BABYLON 5 cut to the choral music from THE PHANTOM MENACE.

Straczynski ("just call me Joe, I can't even pronounce 'Mr. Straczynski'") is a prickly, sarcastic, occasionally rude man who's not above making fun of the fans who ask him questions. His talk was liberally peppered with comments about TNT ("morons") and his reaction to their treatment of his show. Anyone who's ever annoyed him is fair game for his vitriolic attacks. But he's an undeniable talent and has left science fiction fans with a marvelous legacy of internally-consistent shows.

Where did Warner Bros stand regarding the controversy over TNT dumping B5 follow-up CRUSADE? Joe said that they stand where they usually do—aside. Straczynski refused to elaborate further on his relationship with the studio or the reasons for TNT refusing to pick up CRUSADE for a full year. However, if his tale about a script meeting he had with TNT is any indication, the reasons are apparent.

He explained that there are two TNTs: one in Hollywood, one in Atlanta. In his words: "LA understands creativity, Atlanta does not." Some of Atlanta's suggestions: could Joe put in a character whose first contact protocol is to have sex with aliens to understand them better? ("I've never yet had sex that lead to better understanding"). Straczynski said this was typical of the thinking at TNT.

Joe fielded questions about his life's work, BABYLON 5. Someone asked for details about the infamous "birth of B5 in



Series creator J. Michael ("Just call me Joe") Straczynski, with DOP John Flinn (right), directing B5's penultimate show "Sleeping in Light," telling it like it is.

the shower" story. And another wondered where was that magical bible kept throughout the show's run?

"When I'm naked in the shower, I only think big thoughts." He had an idea for an epic series about space battles, alien invasions, etc. And another idea for a smaller, intimate story set on a space station. In the shower that day "I realized, shit, they're the same story!" He decided to use one to comment on the other; that is, the smaller microcosm to illustrate the larger issues. "At that moment I saw how the whole thing was going to lay out, and I raced out of the shower dripping wet, grabbed a notepad and wrote all this stuff down. The funny thing is that later I broke it down into index cards, one card per episode for 110 episodes. You ask where was the inspiration, where's the secret? It was in a black binder, a black notebook sitting on my desk in my office at B5, in plain view, for five years!"

Is there a possibility that BABYLON 5 could continue as a series of theatrical films? "To be honest, I'm not in a real hurry. My goal was to do five years of B5 and tell the story from beginning to end. The books can

fill in the corners and stuff. But I ain't looking to make this into this massive deal. Perhaps five years from now I might do one, but I just want to sit for a while. I would want to have enough time to think about it; I wouldn't want to do it just to do it. I want to tell one hell of a story, and that requires a lot of thought. So I'm in no particular rush."

He's asked about the end of the series. First-time director Straczynski said the entire crew and cast were in tears, but even here there's a funny story: Mira Furlan (Delenn) didn't want to deal with aging prosthetics, but the emotion on the set was so intense that when Bruce Boxleitner grabbed her in a farewell

hug, her makeup got squeezed, giving the effect of wrinkles! Joe didn't tell her; he forbade anyone to tell her; so her makeup stayed that way and he got the shots he wanted. He says, "It was hard to shoot because I was the only person who could not allow myself to fall apart, because if I did the whole thing was gonna go up."

He freely acknowledges that the end of the two shows has left a massive hole in his life, but he's not just sitting waiting for the phone to ring. He just did a non-science fiction TV movie for CBS, and developed a series concept, THE WORLD ON FIRE, with Chris Carter and Frank Spotnitz, being shopped around for the Fall 2000 season. He also has a feature film in development, what he calls an "SF/action thing," and "Rising Stars," his 24-issue maxi-series for Top Cow Comics is on-going. So even though he misses the universe he created and worked so hard in, he's not bored.

Looking back over five years of both success and heartbreak, how can he sum it up? He claimed "all I could do was make the best show I possibly could, and fight against the invidious, stupid interference we were getting." □

Fantasia 2000

By Mike Lyons

Ask Don Ernst, producer of FANTASIA 2000, if we can expect other sequels to Disney's 1940 masterpiece—FANTASIA's 2002 or 2004, possibly—and his exuberance for the film turns into a sheepish grin. "One day we talk about doing another and then the next day, we say, 'Well, we're never going to do another one of these again,'" he laughed.

There's a reason for such a mood of enthusiasm mingled with exhaustion. FANTASIA 2000 has been a long time coming (this is one of the few films in Hollywood that can, quite literally, brag that it has been six decades in the making). "I've been on the film since '91, when we first began," noted Hendel Butoy, who directed two of FANTASIA 2000's segments and also supervised production of the other new sequences. "I'm actually kind of numb to how people are going to react to it because it's been so long for me.

"No one ever imagined when we first began that a film like this would ever take place," admitted Butoy. "We could only hope. It was in the back of our minds that, maybe, we could make films like they did back in the 'Golden Days' as they called it. The thrill of it is that people out there really do enjoy this art and I think we always had this sense that people would like this, if it was done right. We just felt, back then, that we'd never get that chance to make it happen. Now that it's happened it's terrific to see people respond to it the way that they have."

A sequel to one of the studio's most beloved treasures, FANTASIA 2000 has run a gauntlet of rumors about budget excesses and extended production time, and was eagerly awaited by many in and outside the industry.

When the film finally

The IMAX animation sensation widens its release in July.



Donald Duck checks off the animal couples entering Noah's Ark to the strains of Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance," and gets reunited with his beloved Daisy.



bowed in theatres on New Years Day, it was not only the perfect way for Disney to cap off the millennium, but also proved to be the artistic pinnacle for the studio's decade-long animation Renaissance.

Back in 1940, when FANTASIA was released, the film was a "misunderstood masterpiece." Walt had plans to re-issue the film, like a concert (adding new "numbers" and

deleting others) but lack of response, coupled with the ill timing of an animators strike and World War II, caused Walt to shelve these plans.

It would be almost 30 more years before the world would rediscover FANTASIA. In the late sixties, audiences who were tripping (naturally and otherwise) to such films as 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY and YELLOW SUBMARINE,

found similar thrills in Disney's re-issue of FANTASIA. In fact, many in this new audience began to wonder if Disney's artists were on anything when they made the film. When asked about this, the late Art Babbitt, one of the studio's animators who worked on FANTASIA, replied, "Yes, it's true. I myself was addicted to Ex-Lax and Feenamint."

Flash-forward again another 20 years. It's the late eighties, animation is on an upswing and creativity at the studio is moving into prolific proportions. Walt's nephew, Roy E. Disney, vice chairman of the board and head of the animation department, sees this as the perfect opportunity to fulfill his Uncle's wishes for a FANTASIA "sequel."

Originally entitled FANTASIA '97 (then FANTASIA CONTINUED) this would be a sequel unlike any other. FANTASIA 2000 took its time, with pieces slotted in as they were finished. Because of this, production has carried on longer than the traditional animated film, which has been pudding for the press. In 1997, *The Los Angeles Times* reported that FANTASIA 2000 was over-budget and would join WATERWORLD and TITANIC as one of the most expensive films ever made.

The Disney studio has vehemently denied such reports. In fact, Roy E. Disney, who has carefully shepherded this labor of love from day one, said that this unique production schedule was a blessing, not a curse. "There was no urgency to the film. There was the ability to slide people off of one show and have them for a little while and then slide them into the next show, without everybody else missing a beat."

In addition to Disney, one of the first people on FANTASIA 2000 was Hendel Butoy, who came to the production fresh



The Steadfast Tin Soldier *The Pines of Rome*

Hendel Butoy on directing the film's aerial whale ballet and adapting Hans Christian Andersen.

By Mike Lyons

The inspiration that the artists working on *FANTASIA 2000* had been waiting for was right under their noses, almost literally. In the late thirties and early forties, the Disney studio began work on an omnibus film of Hans Christian Andersen stories. Conceptual artwork created for this abandoned project lay dormant in the studio's Animation Research Library, until 1991, when Disney's publishing branch decided to use some of the art created for "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," in a new children's book.

One of those who bought the book was Hendel Butoy, who, fresh from co-directing *THE RESCUERS DOWN UNDER*, was charged with finding a story to accompany Dmitri Shostakovich's "Piano Concerto Number Two" for the new *FANTASIA*.

"Roy [Disney] brought in the music and asked, 'Is there anything worthwhile here?,'" remembered Butoy. "I took the book out, as I was listening to the

music, the structure of the music and the story seemed to go together, so we decided to pull out all of the original sketches. We put the sketches together as a story reel and everybody looked at it. It was unanimous: we should do this. It was just kind of serendipitous that those sketches were done back then and now it's come around. It's one of those happy coincidences."

"The Steadfast Tin Soldier"

re-tells Anderson's fable, which plays like a darker version of *TOY STORY*. The titular tin soldier finds himself falling in love with a beautiful ballerina doll, only to be cast out of the children's bedroom, where he experiences adventure after adventure in the "real" world.

In addition to "Tin Soldier," Butoy also directed another, completely different, segment of *FANTASIA 2000*. In "The Pines

of Rome," Disney's artists have Ottorino Respighi's music as the backdrop for a whale ballet of sorts. Adding a dash of fantasy, whales are summoned by a nova and not only burst from the water, they take flight, soaring into the night sky.

"With just a verbal concept, we went to story sketch artists," Butoy said, recalling how the sequence was born. "I said, 'I don't know what we're going to do, but let's just think about it. Let's make it a fantasy of some kind.' One of our artists then went and drew what a child might see in the shapes of clouds in the sky. She drew one sketch that had a whale in the clouds. From that sketch we said, 'Well, that's an image that we've never seen before.'"

Then, came the tricky part, how to introduce the idea of flying whales, in this very naturalistic scene, without it being too jolting for the audience. "We played around with where it was that they should leave the water," admitted Butoy. "When it was first storyboarded, we did it at the very beginning. Right now, the

Above: Butoy's computer animated soaring whales, summoned by a supernova, set to the music of Ottorino Respighi's "Pines of Rome." **Below:** Andersen's "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," set to the music of Shostakovich.



way it is, the whale reaches up and then falls back into the water. In early versions, the whale just reached up and kept going. But, as we kept playing with the story, we noticed that you got a much better sensation of flight when you first had the feeling of what it was like to be underwater. The whales should swim around and look natural in their own habitat, then come out of the water. There was a better contrast than to just go with them flying."

Issues of flight were one thing, but the greater challenge for Butoy and his artists was that, in *FANTASIA 2000*, the characters had to convey emotion without the benefit of dialogue.

Said Butoy, "In some cases, when I was talking with the animators, we'd have to say, 'Here's what they would say if they could talk.' We'd have to create our own dialogue just to be able to communicate what the character was trying to say. But this is animation in its purest form, because making a drawing believable is all about making a character look like it's thinking."

"If you notice, even in dialogue animation, the times that you believe a character most is when the character stops moving and just pauses for a bit, because you get the sense that the character is thinking before he's going to do something. In this case it really applies. You don't have the 'crutch' of dialogue."

In addition to directing "Tin Soldier" and "Pines of Rome," Butoy also supervised the entire production of *FANTASIA 2000*. It's been a long, yet rewarding, process for the artist, who was one of the first aboard the project in 1991. □

Director Hendel Butoy, among the first to be brought onto the project by Roy Edward Disney back in 1991.



The Firebird Suite

Brothers Paul and Gaetan Brizzi on directing the film's fiery finale.

When audiences left movie theaters in November of 1940, the last images they remember from *FANTASIA* were, to say the least, indelible. The "Night on Bald Mountain/Ave Maria" sequence was a jolting juxtaposition of life and death. From the evil incarnate of the mountainous Chernabog, his flexing arms conjuring demons out of a swirling mist, to the ethereal sight of a wooded candlelight procession, it was evident that Walt had picked the perfect crescendo to his animated symphony.

It is indeed one of the medium's most memorable moments and yet, Paul and Gaetan Brizzi had to learn to put it out of their mind. "I love 'Night on Bald Mountain' and 'Ave Maria,' they are my favorite pieces of the original *FANTASIA*. But, we didn't want to look at them," said Gaetan. Paul added, "Subliminally, it was there, but it was never used as a reference. It was just the opposite."

It's not that the Brizzi brothers are animation heathens, quite the opposite, the two inhabit the medium, the way a fish inhabits a stream. But, Paul and Gaetan had been charged with directing, "The Firebird Suite," a powerful statement on the forces of nature, which will serve as the finale for *FANTASIA 2000*. Many are already calling it the film's most powerful moment.

"The 'Firebird' finale knocks people off their chairs, literally," said Roy E. Disney. "We screened it, [early last] year at the Beverly Hilton ballroom for our merchandise branch [of the company]. I could see the audience quite clearly and, at one point, there were three women who jumped off of their chairs. It was aston-



French animators Gaetan (l) and Paul Brizzi, with maquettes of the sprite and elk they brought to life to personify the powerful music of Igor Stravinsky.

ishing!"

Set to the music of Igor Stravinsky, "The Firebird Suite" opens with the serene setting of snow covered woods. Slowly making his way through the woods is a dignified elk who awakens a shimmering Sprite from a nearby stream.

The Sprite rises and passes through the woods, bringing life, in the form of springtime, back to the bleak, winter. Spotting an ominous hillside, the Sprite ventures toward it, only to awaken the wrath and fury of the Firebird. A mountainous, gelatinous bird composed of fire and spewing lava, the Firebird represents not only a volcano, but also nature's destructive forces. He is soon intent on destroying the Sprite and everything in his wake.

"We didn't want him to be the villain," said Paul of the character. "We wanted to show that, sometimes, you have to clear things out and destroy, so that we can have renewal. The Firebird wants to kill the Sprite, but only because this is his nature. We wanted to show him as the majesty of destruction." Noted Gaetan, "It was a question of 'Pure evil, or misunderstood genius?' We didn't want him

to be some sort of Halloween joke. There's something behind him. He's revered. He is something of a king, a monarch."

A fiery destructive monster who is not your typical Disney villain? Yes. This is actually fitting, because "The Firebird Suite" is not your typical Disney animation. Lying just beneath the surface of this finale are echoes that will no doubt resonate deep with audiences. "Our goal was to create a visual poem, using the expressions of the characters to convey this," said Paul, adding, "It's a tribute to nature and how it can be so beautiful and so powerful and dangerous and unpredictable. It's really a message of hope, especially at the end of the millennium."

It's no question that the

With death and rebirth as its theme, the Brizzi's feature a woodland sprite summoned by the stag, to represent the beauty and renewal of Springtime.





The shimmering sprite is awakened from a stream in the forest. The Brizzi's independent studio was purchased by Disney to spearhead it's Paris facility.

Brizzi brothers were the perfect choice to direct this weightier segment of *FANTASIA 2000*. The filmmakers seem to have a flair for the darker tone. It was their storyboard work for the opening segment of *THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME* that gave that film a gothic flavor.

"It is very important that you don't talk down to the audience," said Gaetan. "Animation is, but it is not only, kids stuff. It's something more important, it can provide the audience with something different."

Paul and Gaetan Brizzi were already established animators, when Disney came calling for their expertise to help spearhead the studio's Paris facility. In 1989, the Television branch of Disney animation offered to buy the Brizzi's independent studio. "Disney wanted us to come up with new ideas and new ways to do animation," said Gaetan. "We wanted to push animation in other areas of art and into other areas of expression."

The brothers were charged with administrative duties in France, but soon grew restless and came to Disney's Burbank studio to pursue more creativity. "We wanted to be part of this whole Renaissance movement," added Paul. "There is a difference in culture between America and Europe. We wanted to combine European ideas with

American entertainment."

Twin brothers, who were born in Paris in 1951, the Brizzis share "common worlds," as Gaetan calls it, and both swear that there never once has been a trace of sibling rivalry. With their enthusiasm for the medium sometimes choked by wonderfully heavy French accents, the Brizzi's are so in tune, that they, at times, complete each others sentences.

"We know exactly what the other can do," said Paul. "By working together, we know what direction to go. It all comes very naturally. One of us is always complementing the work of the other."

The "Brothers Brizzi" view *FANTASIA 2000* as the project that will help the medium take the giant leap forward that everyone has been waiting for. "I hope that the new *FANTASIA* says to audiences, 'Here is a new way to look at animation,'" noted Gaetan. "I would like it to attract more adults to animation. I would love them to do a new *FANTASIA* every five years. I think this reminds people that this is an art form and maybe this movie could attract people to museums and to galleries. It's almost our duty as artists to innovate, without being too intellectual or too personal, but instead, making the audience more open. I think they're ready to receive something new." □

HENDEL BUTOY

"We always had this sense that people would like this, if it was done right. We felt we'd never get the chance to make it happen. It's terrific to see people respond the way they have."

from 1990's *THE RESCUERS DOWN UNDER* (which he co-directed with *POCAHONTAS*' Mike Gabriel). "As we were coming off of *THE RESCUERS*, I had mentioned that if we ever do another *FANTASIA*, I'd love to be involved with it, in some way," remembered Butoy. "I figured it would never happen. Three months later, I get a phone call from Roy. He's the one who eventually said, 'I think it's time. I think that the artists here have proven themselves. They've done work that's shown that they can do it, we should just go ahead.'"

Only one of the seven original segments returns for the sequel on the hallmark of *FANTASIA*, "The Sorcerer's Apprentice." Seven new segments have been added for *FANTASIA 2000*. Butoy directs "Pines of Rome," set to the music of Ottorino Respighi, the segment tells an ethereal tale of a supernova that allows whales to take flight in the night sky. Dmitri Shostakovich's "Piano Concerto Number Two" sets the stage for a re-telling of Hans Christian Anderson's fable, "The Steadfast Tin Soldier."

Also doing double duty on *FANTASIA 2000* is Eric Goldberg, the multi-talented animator (*ALADDIN*'s Genie) and

director (*POCAHONTAS*) helmed the segments, "Carnival of the Animals" and "Rhapsody in Blue." "Carnival," which uses Camille Saint-Saens music, tells the tale of a flamingo, who, thanks to his talents with a yo-yo, breaks from the "mob mentality" of his peers. "Rhapsody" brings to life, animatedly, the art work of *New York Times* caricaturist Al Hirshfeld, as it tells the tale of 1930's Manhattan, set to Ira Gershwin's beautiful composition.

Donald Duck even gets his own showpiece in *FANTASIA 2000* (take that Mr. Mouse!). "Noah's Duck," reveals a Donald of "Biblical proportions," as Donald plays Noah's assistant and tries frantically to get two of every animal onto the arc. It's all set to Sir Edward Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance," directed by Frances Gleabus.

One of the world's most famous pieces of music, "Beethoven's Fifth," ("Da-da-da-dum") is also used in the new film, as the backdrop for a series of abstract images, directed by Pixote Hunt. Then, there is the film's finale, "The Firebird Suite," which tells the tale of nature's powers of rejuvenation and destruction, directed by the brothers Paul and Gaetan Brizzi.

The opening's abstract imagery is set to the familiar strains of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, pastel shades texture-mapped onto hand-drawn animation.



Carnival of the Animals Rhapsody In Blue

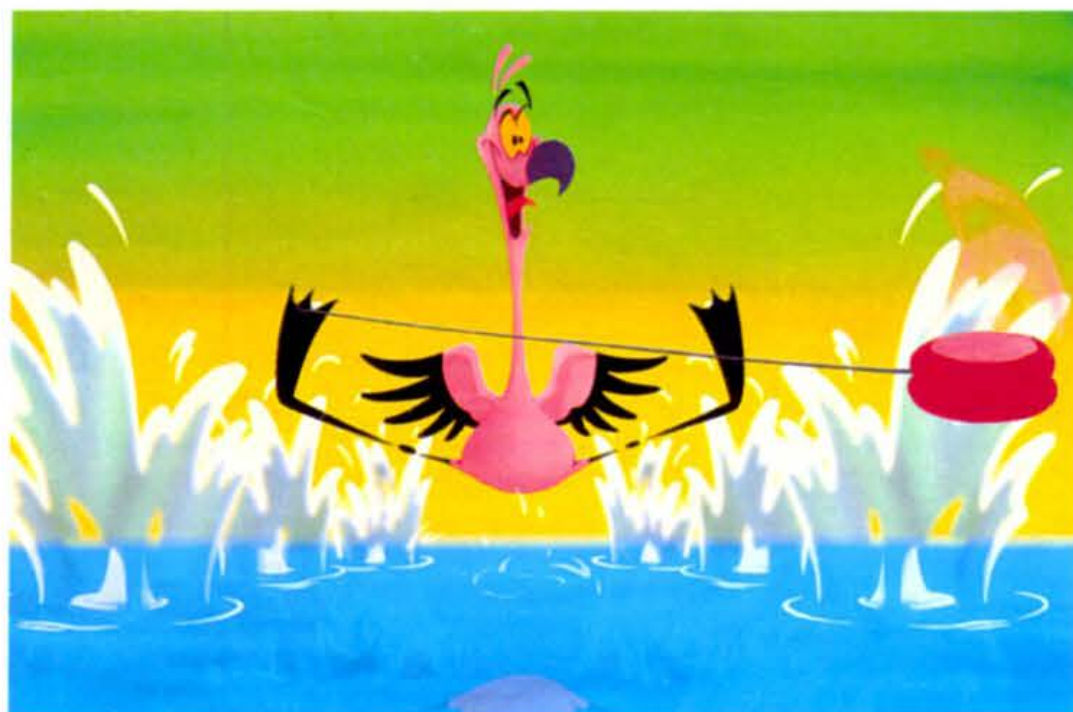
Director Eric Goldberg on his comic carnival of flamingos and his stunning rendition of Gershwin.

By Mike Lyons

You can almost hear the high-concept, Hollywood pitch: "It's a story of breaking free from the dictates of society. It's a tale of individuality. It's about doing the unexpected. Oh, yeah, and it stars flamingos."

It doesn't sound like your usual, formulaic story, which is why it fits perfectly with FANTASIA 2000. In one of the film's seven new segments, set to the music of Camille Saint-Saens' "Carnival of the Animals," a flamingo gets ahold of a yo-yo, much to the chagrin of his snobbish peers (dubbed "the snotty six" by the filmmakers) who do everything possible to quash the individuality of this yo-yo-ing rebel.

The concept for the fast-paced segment came from Joe Grant, a 91-year-old artist, one of the studio's legends, who worked on the first FANTASIA and still works at Disney today, contributing conceptual art and story ideas. "I credit Joe Grant with the high concept. Various people had tried doing different versions of that idea," said mul-



Set to Camille Saint-Saens "Le Carnaval des Animaux," Goldberg devised the comic antics of a wacky flamingo with a yo-yo, a Hollywood high-concept.

ti-talented Eric Goldberg (co-director of POCAHONTAS, animator of the Genie and HERCULES' Phil) who directs the segment.

Original versions had an ostrich getting hold of a yo-yo, which didn't please Goldberg, mainly because he felt it bore too strong a resemblance to one of FANTASIA's original segments, "Dance of the Hours."

"I needed a reason for [the flamingo] to have a yo-yo," noted Goldberg. "Originally, he

just finds it and all of the other flamingos chase him, not unlike the ostriches chasing the one with the grapes in 'Dance of the Hours.' I felt that it was too similar to 'Dance of the Hours,' so I decided to change the dynamic and just make him the goofball that just doesn't want to get in line. He just wants to do his yo-yo tricks and be left alone, thank you very much. Of course, the others don't like that because they have a mob mentality."

Goldberg, who also animated much of the segment, in addition to directing it, found a tremendous amount of inspiration for the look of "Carnival," from his wife, Susan, also a Disney artist. As art director for the segment, Susan arranged for a very distinct palette. "I call it the Hawaiian shirt take," she said. "With today's technology, we have a tendency to make colors very muted. Flamingos are out there, so I figured we would go for the extreme."

"It's not done the traditional way," added Eric. "The entire

piece, flamingos, backgrounds—is all hand water-colored. It gives it a softer, rendered look that you normally don't get with an outline around the character, or tone matte with a shadow." Eric and his crew traveled to the San Diego and LA Zoo to study the anatomy and the walk of flamingos. Also studied were the movements of another filmmaker at the studio, Mike Gabriel, a yo-yo aficionado, who had co-directed POCAHONTAS with Goldberg.

Still, the biggest challenge with "Carnival" was matching the fast-paced movements of the "snotty six" with the fast-paced notes of the music.

"Because there are six of them and because they all do the same thing, you not only have to time the animation right, but you have to space it the right way, so that one head doesn't start repeating."

Far from Flamingos, who dance with Tex Avery-comic precision, is the island of Manhattan in the 1930's. For FANTASIA 2000, Eric and Susan Goldberg have brought both of these worlds to life.

In the early nineties, during production on ALADDIN, Eric, a devoted fan of the work of famed *New York Times* caricaturist Al Hirshfeld, had used the artist's style as the blueprint for the curling, "S"-shape design of the film's Genie. "His work is eminently animatable," said Eric of Hirshfeld. "What he gets into a still drawing are the things that we strive for in animation. His work has elegance, simplicity and suppleness of line."

After ALADDIN opened, Eric approached both Hirshfeld and Disney about setting the

Original FANTASIA storyman Joe Grant, now 91, came up with the idea of celebrating individuality, lushly rendered in pastel watercolor animation.





Goldberg also directed the film's most outstanding segment, George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" set to the cartoon imagery of Al Hirschfeld.

Hirschfeld style against Ira Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue." He had Hirschfeld's blessing, but had a difficult time selling the studio on the idea.

During some "down time," after production on "Carnival" wrapped, Eric storyboarded the "Rhapsody" sequence, hoping to pitch it to Disney as a short subject. The project was given a go-ahead by Feature Animation President, Thomas Schumacher. Then, a month into production on "Rhapsody," Roy E. Disney noticed that FANTASIA 2000 needed a boost.

"There were parts of it that were dragging," admitted Eric. "Roy [Disney] turned to me, after a screening and said, 'You think 'Rhapsody' is going to be done in time?' So, all of a sudden, it became a FANTASIA piece."

Set in 1930's Manhattan, the film centers on four characters: Duke, a construction worker, who dreams of being a jazz musician; Joe, a perpetually out-of-work loner; fun-loving John (caricatured after noted animation historian John Culhane), who tries to get the most out of life, despite his stuffy socialite wife; and a little girl (based on the Goldbergs' daughter, Rachel) who gets dragged around the city by a zealous nanny.

Within this story, look for all the familiar Hirschfeld touches to be brought to life in animation—bold, continuous lines, famous caricatured cameos (including one of Hirschfeld himself) and, yes, even the famed, hidden "Nina's" (a name the artist always inserts subliminally into his draw-

ings—it's become his trademark).

Once again, Goldberg directed the segment, with Susan working out the color palette as art director. "I went from the warm colors of the tropics to the 'cools' of New York," noted Susan. "Every color in 'Rhapsody' has a certain amount of blue in it. My intention was to see how far I could take a limited palette and make it look like we're using a very vast palette." In addition, Susan also assigned certain colors to each character, which reflects their personalities (for example: Rachel is a "warm" pink and John is a "heartfelt" purple).

More than just style, "Rhapsody," like all the segments in FANTASIA 2000, has a message. "It's about everybody chasing their dream and realizing their dream," noted Eric.

For the Goldbergs, who have been married almost twenty years and working together for almost as long, at their own studio in London and now at Disney, FANTASIA 2000 represents what they consider a pinnacle of artistic freedom. "We got something on the screen that really feels like our vision," said Eric. "And, we did it with the studio's blessing."

"This was a project that no one wanted to work on at first," remembered Susan. "As it gathered momentum, people began to realize that this was going to be a project like the first FANTASIA. I hope that this film serves as a 'marker' and that the next generation will be able to build another FANTASIA on top of this one." □

ROY E. DISNEY

"They'll all say, 'How dare you mess with a masterpiece?' and all the other things they accused the first film of. When you see the film it's like listening to the music through entirely new ears."

Noted Paul Brizzi, "I want the audience to leave FANTASIA with the feeling that they have taken a journey into this world of animation, that they have gone into the imagination of the artist. They should feel as if they have just gone into an eclectic world of ideas, of art, of expression. It should all feel like a beautiful dream that you don't want to wake up from."

Of course, there are those members of both music and animation elite who will call FANTASIA 2000 heresy. When the original FANTASIA debuted, many in the realm of classical music dismissed the film. Igor Stravinsky whose "Right of Spring" was actually used in the original (and whose "Firebird" is in the new film), dismissed the original FANTASIA as, what he called, "an unresisting imbecility."

Those were the nascent days of animation, however, when it was still considered more "cartoon" and less of an art form. It was also well before FANTASIA had risen to masterpiece proportions. Now, many that feel the original shouldn't have been tampered with are ready to pounce. "We're going to have to endure the critics," admitted Roy Disney. "They're all going to say, 'How dare you mess with a masterpiece?' and all of the other things that they accused the first film of. But, when you see the film, it's like listening to the music through entirely new ears."

"All we're doing is what Walt would have done had circumstances been different," added producer Ernst. "So, I honestly don't feel that I have to defend it, because this is something that Walt wanted to do originally."

In FANTASIA, noted musicologist Deems Taylor served as on-screen host and M.C., of sorts. In FANTASIA 2000, the

filmmakers have decided to use a variety of names. Among the famous faces introducing the musical segments during the film's live-action "interstitial" sequences are James Earl Jones, Steve Martin, Penn and Teller and Bette Midler. Directing these sequences is Don Hahn, most famous for producing at Disney (BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, THE LION KING).

More pressing than who would be the right "name" to introduce each segment, was which music to choose for this closely watched sequel. Since the original FANTASIA, music has exploded into areas of rock, punk, rap and alternative, but the filmmakers behind the sequel are keeping things decidedly classical, for now.

"We would listen to music for about two hours at a time," said Butoy, "which is about as long as you can take, just sit back and imagine. When something would move you, you would say, 'Hey that was a

Director Eric Goldberg with wife and art director Susan Goldberg, savoring their pinnacle of artist freedom.



Roy E. Disney

Walt's nephew on realizing a cherished dream in producing the new sequel.

When Roy E. Disney was a boy, he used to listen closely to the sound of his father's car pulling up to the house each evening. If the car "slammed," into the driveway, young Roy knew that dad and Uncle Walt had argued that day and he would quickly head for another room. Never did that young boy think that some day he would be a vital player in that "family business" that bears his name. Starting his career in 1954, as an assistant film editor on the TRUE-LIFE ADVENTURE documentaries, he now serves as vice chairman of the board and head of the animation department.

It's safe to say that, when it comes to the philosophy, the history and the mystery of Disney there is no "Cast Member" currently working at the studio that has seen it from more perspectives than Roy E. Disney. After all, he is the nephew of Walt himself, and son of Roy O. Disney, the financially savvy brother, who was the practical side of Walt's creativity.

"Growing up around Walt and my father, anything was possible," said Disney. "That's the thing that has continued, especially since Michael [Eisner] and Frank [Wells] came aboard. There's that sense that possibilities are endless, so nothing surprises you."

When Michael Eisner joined Disney as CEO in 1984, he realized that Roy was the best brain to pick when it came to understanding the company. Roy Disney had just taken over the animation department and wanted to expand this foundering niche of the company that had once been its cornerstone. During one of Disney and Eisner's weekly



Disney, in charge of the studio's feature animation, with a maquette of star Donald Duck, completing Walt's grand design.

lunches, the subject of doing a sequel to FANTASIA came up. "I saw a look in Michael's eye when I told him about FANTASIA and he said, 'Yeah, that's kind of an interesting idea,'" remembered Disney. "So, I tucked away his reaction and thought, 'That was interesting, I can't imagine previous administrations reacting that way.'"

Roy Disney was nine years old when he first saw what many consider his uncle's greatest artistic achievement. "I thought it was exciting, there were a lot of things happening all the time," said Disney of FANTASIA. "I also loved it because I knew that it was conceived as an endless idea. You could keep reinventing it and going back to it."

That indeed was Walt's intent for FANTASIA when it bowed in 1940. The film was to return to theatres, from time-to-time, with new segments added and older ones deleted. Due to circumstances beyond Walt's control (most

notably an animators' strike and World War II) his plans for FANTASIA never came to fruition. But, that nine-year-old nephew never forgot.

In 1991, Roy Disney gave his reluctant blessing to release FANTASIA on home video, where it went on to sell eight million copies worldwide. He remembered, "I wrote Michael a little note and said, 'Not only should we do the second FANTASIA, but now we can afford it!'" And so, that same year, Walt's wish was fulfilled, as production began on another FANTASIA.

Roy Disney's labor of love now caps off an incredible animation resurgence at the studio. When considering why animation not only came back, but came back with a vengeance, Disney gives full credit to the artists at the studio, for expanding boundaries, and to audiences, as well. "Maybe the public wanted it to happen, in a way. I think, maybe, they missed it. There was a long period there where it was not as good as it could have been. The really bad, cheap stuff in TV animation made a contribution to that. There was a long period there when animation was almost a dirty word. LITTLE MERMAID and, even before that, GREAT MOUSE DETECTIVE, ROGER RABBIT and OLIVER AND COMPANY, helped change things."

And what's it been like to have been a part of helping the "family business" rise Phoenix-like from the ashes? "It's just been a hell of a ride," said Disney with an amazed smile. "I keep telling people, 'I don't know why they pay me to do what I do, it's just too much fun.'"

By Mike Lyons

great piece maybe we should pursue that."

Now, a decade later, those notes that filled the air have been imagined visually and gone out before the world unlike any film before. FANTASIA 2000 had its world premiere at New York's Carnegie Hall on December 17th, with a live orchestra, under the conduction of renowned maestro James Levine, who also conducted the music for the film.

After New York, FANTASIA 2000 embarked on a two-week world tour that included "concert screenings" in London, Paris, Tokyo and Pasadena, where the film came home for a special New Year's Eve gala.

Then, on New Year's Day, FANTASIA 2000 opened for a four-month engagement at IMAX theaters throughout the world (making it the first feature-length animated film in this format). After this, FANTASIA 2000 takes a brief hiatus and will then rollout to area theaters in July. So, if you haven't yet seen it in IMAX, hurry.

"This isn't even close to the normal filmmaking experience," said Ernst. "We're telling little stories and we try to have a flow. So, it's a completely different experience. There was a smaller group of people working on this, so that the work comes through more slowly. It was day to day work, but it was exciting."

"Each director probably has thoughts on their own sequences," noted Butoy. "But, what gives me the greatest thrill is when people react to the different imagery that's on the screen the exact same way that I reacted to it when I first imagined it, because there's some kind of connection there. You're able to make someone go through the same emotion and same sense of feelings. My hope is that anyone who watches this film goes through the same spectrum of emotion and excitement and thrill that we had coming up with the ideas and the images." □



Producer Don Ernst

Fantasia 2000

By Mike Lyons

When the original FANTASIA opened on November 13, 1940, critics didn't know how to react to it. It was given lukewarm reviews and treated as a disappointment for Walt Disney. It would take almost another 30 years before the film would be re-discovered.

When FANTASIA 2000 opened on January 1, 2000, critics didn't know how to react to it. It was given lukewarm reviews and treated as a disappointment for the Walt Disney Studios. Let's hope audiences don't wait another 30 years to discover this one.

FANTASIA 2000 rolls out into area theaters this July, after a four-month engagement at IMAX theatres. If you missed it on the BIG screen, make sure you don't miss it on the, well, on the somewhat smaller big screen. With a respectful tip of the hat to the original, FANTASIA 2000 looks, sounds and feels like a perfect, logical extension of Walt Disney's original vanguard film.

The new FANTASIA opens with careful precision, unveiling a sequence set to one of music's most famous movements, "Beethoven's Fifth Symphony." The segment's director, Pixote Hunt, has imagined the music as a battle between good and evil (with the stakes raised for the latter) played out not by characters, but by surrealistic, triangular images. It's well conceived and kinetic in movement, but way too short.

In Ottorino Respighi's "Pines of Rome," we're shown a herd of whales who, thanks to the explosion of a supernova, are able to take flight. "Pines" is a beautifully directed scene by Hendel Butoy, who brings to it the same dizzying sense of scale

A testament to the power of the imagination, and a soaring achievement.



Director Eric Goldberg's "Rhapsody in Blue," a short incorporated into the final mix that proves to be one of the Disney Studio's shining moments.

and feel for naturalistic movement that was on display in his *RESCUERS DOWN UNDER* (clouds flow under the whales like breaking waves, breaking waves make their way into the sky like clouds).

Butoy also directed "Shostakovich's Piano Concerto No. 2," which has been used as the backdrop for a re-telling of Hans Christian Anderson's "Steadfast Tin Soldier," in which a toy soldier must fend off an evil jack-in-the box for the affections of a ballerina doll. With a distinctly delicate touch that's light-years from the sweeping vistas of "Pines of Rome," Butoy imbues "Tin Soldier," with the comfortable warmth of Disney's classic fairy-tales.

The studio has included one of the original FANTASIA's hallmarks, "The Sorcerer's Appren-

tice," starring Mickey Mouse (neither time, nor the expanse of the IMAX screen, has removed the luster from Mickey's pointed blue hat). As a counterpoint, the new FANTASIA features a vehicle for Donald Duck, set to the familiar strains of "Pomp and Circumstance."

In the sequence, Donald is Noah's assistant, attempting to get all of the animals on the Ark, while trying to locate his lost love, Daisy. The segment is a beautiful example of character animation, in the way it retains all of Donald's personality in pantomime, without having the Duck mutter one of his incomprehensible "quackings." "Pomp" also features a wonderful, building crescendo of a finish that makes one wonder why the filmmakers didn't choose it as the finale.

Instead, FANTASIA 2000

culminates with the somber "Firebird Suite," an animated blow to the solar plexus. Directed by Paul and Gaetan Brizzi, Stravinsky's music is used as a backdrop for a battle between the sprite of spring and the destructive power of a volcano (taking the shape of a giant firebird, dripping lava like a melting Phoenix). The sequence ends FANTASIA 2000 on a quiet, reflective note.

Despite its somber ending, what audiences may remember most from the new FANTASIA 2000 are the film's two more fast-paced moments, both directed by Eric Goldberg. One, set to "Carnival of the Animals," shows us what happens when a flamingo gets hold of a yo-yo, in a sequence so slick and quick, it's as if Goldberg has channeled the frenetic power of the late Tex Avery.

Goldberg is also responsible for what may not only be the best sequence in FANTASIA 2000, but one of the Disney's studio's shining moments, "Rhapsody in Blue." The sequence tells the tale of a group of characters, living in Manhattan during the Depression. With a style that's inspired by the caricaturist Al Hirschfeld, "Rhapsody" has a feel that's distinctly Disney and yet altogether something its own, merging the sparseness of a UPA studio cartoon, the pace of Warner Bros' Looney Tunes and the heart and humor of silent films. Gershwin's music is realized so perfectly that it will be difficult to ever listen to it again without having the images, the movement, the emotions and the color of "Rhapsody in Blue" race through your brain. "Rhapsody" shows, in spades, what both FANTASIAS were intended to be: testaments to the power of the imagination. □

SCREAM 3

Elicits few screams from an audience that prefers to react mostly with sly cackles and glib backtalk.

By Thomas Doherty

Trilogy or sequel? That is the self reflexive question posed from beyond the grave on videotape by Randy Meeks (Jamie Kennedy), the media-centric wisecracker from SCREAM and SCREAM 2, regarding the likely narrative machinations and sequence of victims for SCREAM 3. Randy is, or was, an expert in the conventions and clichés of the genre, determined never to be bushwhacked by a plot twist and to keep one step ahead of the serial killer MO, though, alas for him, not far enough ahead in SCREAM 2.

More wheels within wheels than squeals within squeals, SCREAM 3 ladles out the irony thicker than the fake blood.

Unlike THE SIXTH SENSE and THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT, SCREAM distances the spectator from the lethal action in a blur of postmodern banter and frame-breaking asides that would leave Bertold Brecht dizzy. No one actually screams watching the SCREAM films; the preferred reactions are sly cackles and glib backtalk. Thus, when MTV alum Jenny McCarthy, as female victim #2, makes a bonehead reference to the shower scene in VERITIGO, the guy behind me muttered, on cue, "PSYCHO, you bimbo."

By now, director Wes Craven and screenwriter Kevin Williamson's white-masked, black-robed, raspy-voiced knife thrower is an old bud, a fair friend well met. The guy under the mask changes but his wry way with a nubile teenager in a towel remains consistent. In his latest and allegedly last outing, he (or she) stalks the soundstages and slices the dramatis persona of STAB 3, a motion picture version of the infamous Westboro murders choreographed so lovingly in SCREAM and SCREAM 2.

With the witty scripter Williamson having bowed out of the third outing to direct the lackluster TEACHING MRS. TINGLE, Craven passed the ginsu knives to



Neve Campbell and David Arquette in SCREAM 3, an ironic ending—or is it?

Ehren Kruger. Like Williamson, Kruger knows that an adolescent audience reared on video rentals and cable repeat viewings will be wise to the most arcane film references: to the previous SCREAMs, to their horror kindred, to wrap-around extratextual information. (The director of STAB 3 claims only to want to make a good family melodrama. Perhaps something like MUSIC OF THE HEART?)

As always, Craven's method is to populate the proceedings with young and attractive performers and then kill them. If his films were more realistic, audiences might even feel pangs of regret as principles and expendables alike go under the blade in random order, often departing from the usual hierarchy in the victim sweepstakes.

Returning from the first two installments are the sole survivors: Cotton Weary (Liev Schreiber), in a brief prelude; the decent, under-achieving local cop Dewey Riley (David Arquette), now technical advisor on STAB 3; ruthless tabloid hack Gale Weathers (Courteney Cox Arquette), still coveting that Pulitzer Prize (Advice to journalism students: "Break the rules. Stop at nothing."), and, of course, the prime object of pursuit, the luscious Sidney Prescott (Neve Campbell).

Evincing an understandable obsession with home security systems, Sidney hides in seclusion, working as a counselor on a women's crisis hotline. Anyone surprised when that hoarse telephone voice breaks in to ask her what her favorite movie is has obviously bought a ticket to MANSFIELD PARK and wandered in to the wrong venue.

The double plot structure dictates that all the SCREAM characters have on-screen doppelgängers, namely the actors who play them in STAB 3. No wonder Cox-Arquette as Gale registers bemusement when Dewey, played by her real-life, plain-as-a-fence-post husband, is impersonated by the devilishly handsome Matt Keeslar. And the killer? Is he (or she) the sleazy Hollywood producer (Lance Henriksen)? The ambitious young director (Scott Foley)? The handsome homicide detective (Patrick Dempsey)? Or perhaps the seemingly harmless actress playing Sidney?

Like it matters: the SCREAMs are fueled by slash-and-chase chaos, not dramatic coherence. Sad to report, the late Randy Meeks would be contemptuous of the predictable shenanigans on stage in either SCREAM 3 or STAB 3: hands lunge through win-

dows, dead bodies never seem to stay put, and a trip to the basement is a Bad Idea. Despite screenwriter Kruger's multilevel genre smarts ("I've got to get a new agent," sighs Jenny McCarthy, bemoaning her role as a 35-year-old actress playing a 21-year-old) and droll dialogue ("He was making a movie called STAB. He was stabbed," deadpans a cop.), the dialogue creaks as much as it crackles. Adding to the surfeit of in-jokes and distancing devices is a parade of too cute cameos: Roger Corman as a studio executive, Carrie Fisher as a washed-up actress once up for the role of Princess Leia in STAR WARS, and a crowd-pleasing glimpse of Kevin Smith and Jason Mewes in their Silent Bob and Jay mode.

SCREAM 3 boasts one real ace in the shape of indie princess Parker Posey as the screen version of Gale in STAB 3. Playing a bubbleheaded neurotic, Posey is hilarious. She and Cox-Arquette hiss out some nice catty insults over who is the better reporter, the imitation or the genuine item.

By the time the killer's mask comes off to spout a mouthful of highly annoying exposition, SCREAM 3 has hushed to a whisper. At the end credits, one will be left pondering only the question of genre closure. Trilogy or sequel? Craven claims to have closed out the series, but when the third installment of a horror franchise opens to a \$35 million weekend, perhaps he was just being ironic. □

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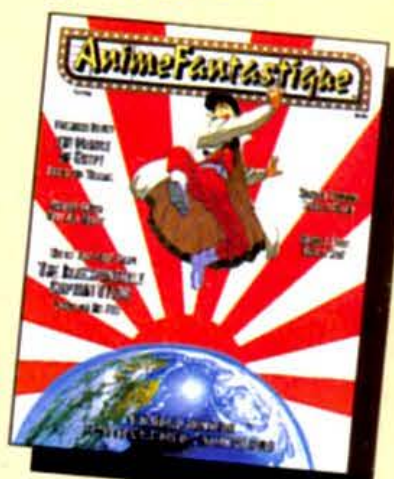
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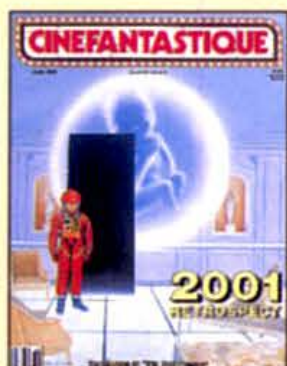
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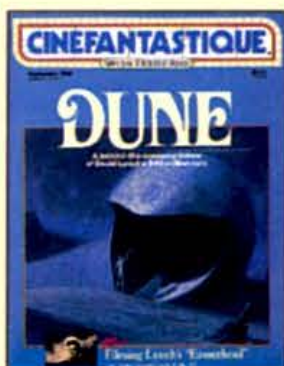
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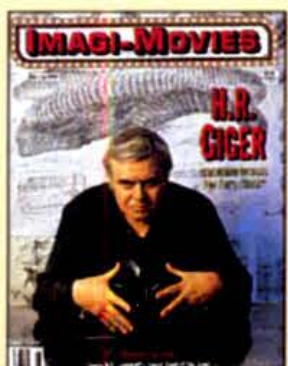
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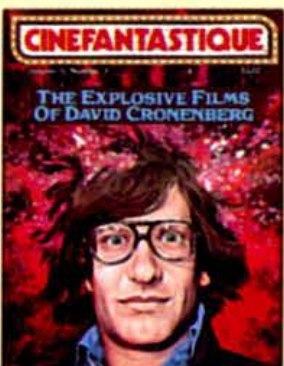
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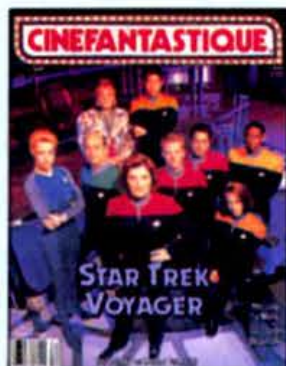
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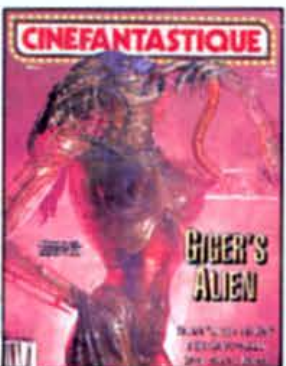
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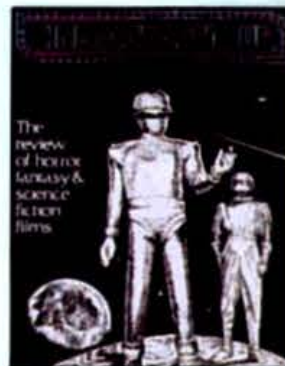
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